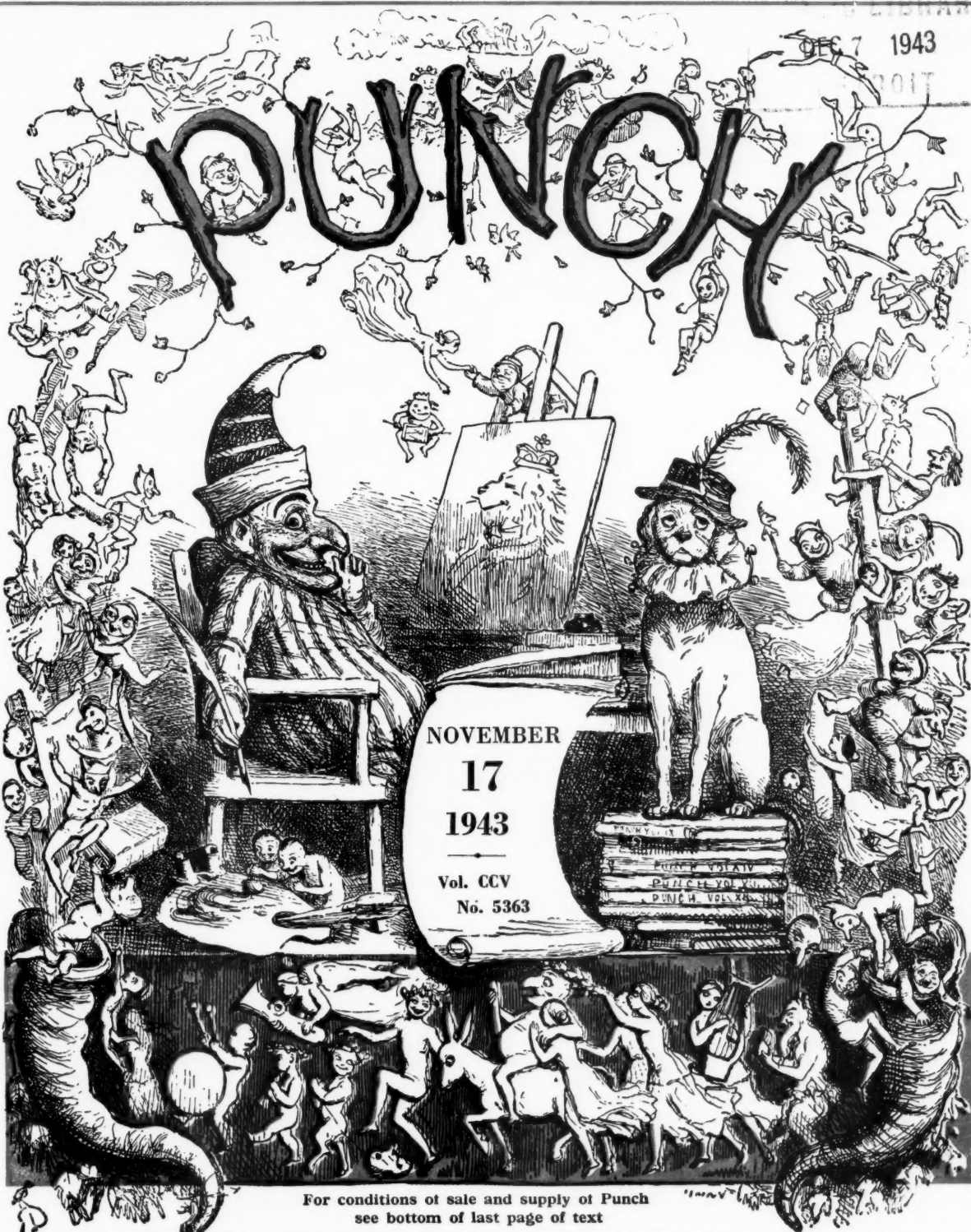


Salvage all rubber unsparingly....
RUBBER MEANS MEN'S LIVES!

DUNLOP

34/35

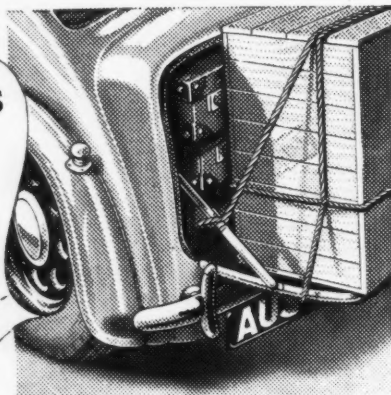


For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
 see bottom of last page of text

I am the
Safety glass—Triplex
 Regd

● FROM AUSTINS TO AUSTIN OWNERS

"HEY! THIS
IS MORE
THAN
I CAN
BEAR"



Overloading produces localised stresses in tyre walls. Ruptured fabric and broken casings soon result. Overinflation cannot make up for overloading—it only renders the rubber more liable to cuts. However keen you are to see your Austin give of its utmost in its wartime job, never exceed the load specified for your tyres. Remember, your Austin can take it—but can your tyres?

HELP YOUR AUSTIN TO HELP THE COUNTRY

Read the AUSTIN MAGAZINE—it contains useful tips—4d monthly

THE AUSTIN MOTOR CO. LTD., LONGBRIDGE, BIRMINGHAM

S.D.214

FIGHTING and THINKING

"Fighting now is winning the war. . . Thinking now can win the peace. To-day millions of Service men are fighting for 'a better world to live in'. Other millions are performing miracles of production. To-morrow these millions will be permanently employed in peacetime pursuits provided they—all of one mind—dictate sound peace terms calling for sustained prosperity.

If the world is to prosper, there must be the same cohesion among the United Nations during the transition period and thereafter as now exists. . .

The people of this country, in common with the people of other lands, will prosper materially and spiritually only if insistence, world-wide in scope, is now voiced for a JUST AND DURABLE PEACE."

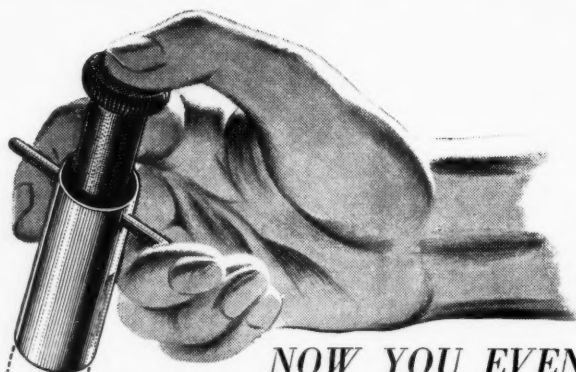
★ ★ ★

The above is an extract from a statement which has been issued by the International Nickel Company of Canada, and is widely published in Canada and the U.S.A.

We reproduce the extract here because we believe that all engaged in Industry in Britain will approve its principles, and desire to collaborate with all the United Nations in formulating plans for "a just and durable peace."

Published by

THE MOND NICKEL COMPANY LTD



NOW YOU EVEN PLANT WITH A TUBE

★The "Fluora Seedsets" people have invented a useful little gadget that enables seedlings to be grown individually. They've done away with all that thinning out process and wastage of seed. We're not here to advertise this new gadget (although we don't mind passing on a good tip when we hear of one), our main object is to point out that our old friend the steel tube is the basis of this invention. Maybe by continually pointing out the universal usefulness of steel tubes we may plant a seed or two ourselves among manufacturers with fertile minds.

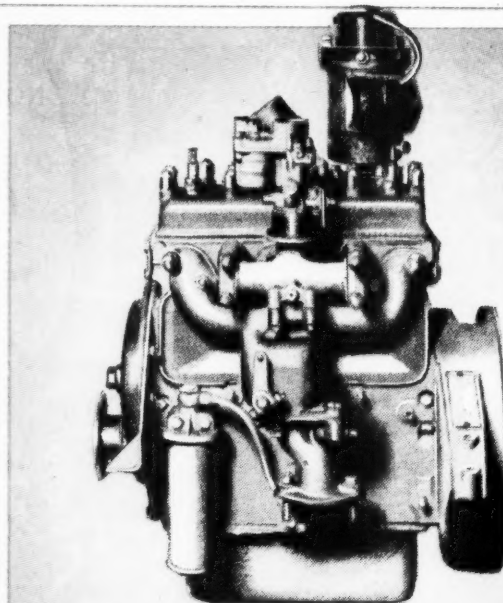
An advertisement for

BRITANNIA TUBE CO. LTD

Glover St. Birmingham

BY TUBE INVESTMENTS LTD

★ If you want a green thumb, don't write us—Write: Fluora Seedsets, Merrilees, Grove Lane, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks



The F.S.M., one of the Coventry Climax engines used extensively on our Godiva trailer fire-fighters.

COVENTRY CLIMAX ENGINES LTD., COVENTRY



A Square Meal for the Workers...



Esse
all-purpose
Cooking Equipment

You will find that ESSE Cooking Equipment will satisfy the needs of the most exacting of kitchen staff. Well designed, its advantages are many. Send us details of your requirements and let our highly skilled staff advise you in the choice to meet your particular needs.

THE ESSE COOKER CO.

Proprietors: Smith & Wellstood Ltd. Established 1854
Head Office & Works: **BONNYBRIDGE, SCOTLAND**
London Showrooms:
63 CONDUIT ST., W.1 - 8 UPPER THAMES ST., E.C.4 - 11 LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.4
Also at LIVERPOOL, EDINBURGH and GLASGOW

DECAY DIGS IN

The teeth we have now must last a life-time: there is no re-issue. It's common sense to avoid preventable tooth decay, to give decay no chance to dig in.

The most prolific cause of ordinary decay is the decomposition of food particles which are allowed to cling to the teeth or remain lodged in the crevices between the teeth. Thorough brushing of the teeth after every meal is the sensible precaution: but it is not sensible to choose for this task a brush which because of its shape cannot possibly reach all the surface of all your teeth.

Tek is scientifically designed to fit every mouth, to reach every tooth and every part of every tooth.



Tek MADE IN ENGLAND

BRISTLES 2/- Plus Purchase Tax 5d
NYLON 1/8 Plus Purchase Tax 4d

Made and guaranteed by
JOHNSON & JOHNSON (Gt. Britain) Ltd.
Slough and Gargrave T.11



"BED, HOT LEMON and a couple of aspirins"

"I'm off to bed with hot lemon and a couple of aspirins." When a man says that, it doesn't necessarily mean that his temperature's rising and his mind's wandering! It may mean that, hidden away somewhere, he keeps a bottle of Lembar for just such occasions as this. Lembar is 35% pure lemon juice with Scotch barley, cane sugar and glucose—just what the doctor ordered, in fact—and so, when one is able to buy a bottle, it's too precious to drink, as one drank it in peacetime, as a delicious thirst-quencher.

RAYNER'S

Lembar

BEST FOR ILLNESS—
BEST FOR HEALTH

MADE BY RAYNER & COMPANY LIMITED EDMONTON LONDON N.18

PV.6



Sale restricted
in Wartime to
H.M. Forces.

21/1/41.

In the Spring of 1916 I bought a pair of Lotus Veldtschoen. I wore them throughout the war and since then every winter during the worst of the weather, and only this morning did they show the slightest sign of taking in water slightly.

LOTUS
Veldtschoen
GUARANTEED WATERPROOF

MADE BY LOTUS LTD. AGENTS IN ALL PRINCIPAL TOWNS

Highest possible quality



Lowest possible price

★ It has been a revelation to many people to discover how little a good Vermouth need cost—when it's produced here at home. That's one of the useful things Votrix has taught and it will be still remembered when wine becomes more plentiful everywhere than it is today.

VOTRIX VERMOUTH

Votrix, produced at the Vine Products Vinery in Surrey, may often be difficult to get, owing to wartime restrictions, but it is still available. "Dry," bottle size 7/6. "Sweet," bottle size 7/-.

ASK A SAILOR



Ask a sailor what he knows about Lister's and he'll tell you of engines standing up without a falter to hard work, often in gruelling conditions. Sometimes it may be that "sailors don't care," but they certainly do when it comes to equipment.

Lister products are built to give service in the real sense of the word. Engines, generating plant, auto-trucks, cream separators, dairy appliances and the rest—they can all be depended on to do their work efficiently.

R. A. LISTER & CO. LTD., DURSLEY, GLOS.



The Colonial Architects...

The houses of the 18th century, in the older States of North America, will always awaken admiration for their builders. These men, usually anonymous, successfully adapted Europe's suavest style to a wild setting. Upon the border of the unknown, they asserted the virtues of design and scholarship, and to the pioneer Architects of the Colonial style, we pay this tribute... we who also have long been pioneers.

CELOTEX LIMITED

Makers of insulation boards, wall boards and acoustic tiles
N. CIRCULAR RD. • STONEBRIDGE PARK • LONDON • N.W.10

Sparklets

(REGD. TRADE MARK)

All available supplies of SPARKLETS BULBS are being distributed as equitably as possible. For the present, please "go easy with the soda" and return empty Bulbs promptly to your usual supplier.



HYGIENIC—CONVENIENT—ECONOMICAL

247C

OPTREX

the

eye lotion

N.B. Only the best is good enough
for your eyes

Optrex Ltd., Perivale, Middlesex

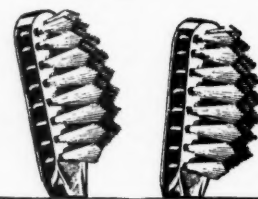
★ TAKE CARE OF
YOUR TOOTHBRUSH

Halex

Regd. Trade Mark

TOOTHBRUSHES

*stay springy
longer!*



BRISTLE OR NYLON...HALEX
MAKE THE BEST OF BOTH BRUSHES

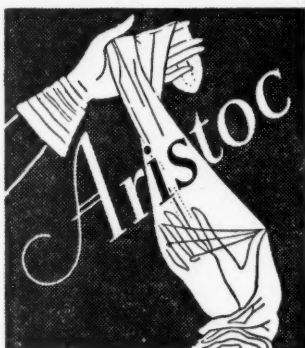
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Supplies are limited. Fair shares are distributed to all ARISTOC dealers

* AS GOOD AS WARTIME STOCKINGS CAN BE



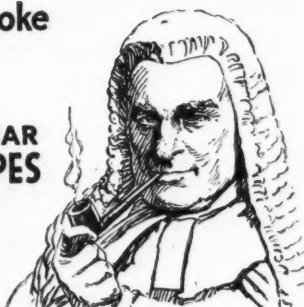
All shrewd Judges smoke

Orlik BRIAR PIPES

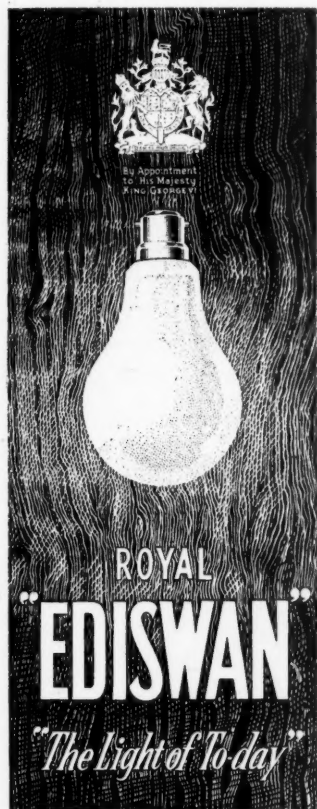
The demand for Orlik pipes far exceeds the supply, but the quality is still as good as ever. If you have difficulty in obtaining a genuine Orlik London Made pipe, please write to us for address of the nearest Tobacconist who can supply you.

L. ORLIK LTD., LONDON, E.C.1

Established 1899



Also PETROL LIGHTERS & POUCHES
Orlik wind-proof Petrol Lighters give a sure light for cigarette or pipe, indoors or out. Orlik Pouches in a variety of styles.



Advertisement of
THE EDISON SWAN ELECTRIC CO. LTD.
185, Charing Cross Rd., London, W.C.2. (L.34)

Half-health's no good
in the Navy! There's a
job to be done and it
needs fitness to do it.



- every morning take
ENO'S
"FRUIT SALT"
2/- and 3/6 a bottle (tax inc.)

Which is your
flavourite?



Yorkshire Relish

THICK or THIN

New Controlled Prices:

THICK 11d. THIN 11d. & 1/3d.

Made by Goodall, Backhouse & Co. Ltd., Leeds

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THE GREATEST NAME IN COTTON



Manufacturers of **Utility Fabrics** also:-

SHEETS · PILLOW CASES · TOWELS and COTTON BLANKETS



HORROCKSES, CREWSON & CO. LTD., PRESTON, MANCHESTER, BOLTON, LONDON

ESTB. 1742

WHITBREAD

& Co. LTD.

*Brewers
of ale and stout
for over two centuries*



It's pukka gen

The wallah who put me on to FOUR SQUARE certainly had the pukka gen on baccy. No 'mouth' or 'throat' however much you smoke. Must be something in what he said about FOUR SQUARE being a dandy smoke without artificial scent or flavouring. Anyway, from now on it's FOUR SQUARE for me. Six blends to choose from—

FOUR SQUARE Cigarettes 20 for 2/4

FOUR SQUARE

GEORGE DOBIE & SON LTD., PAISLEY, SCOTLAND

VIRGINIAS RED SQUARES

A rich, cool, satisfying Virginia. 'Broken Flake' of medium cut. Very cool and long-lasting

- per oz. 2/11

BROWN SQUARES

A finer cut Empire Virginia, shredded and toasted. Dark in colour, but very soft flavour

- per oz. 2/7

YELLOW SQUARES

Similar style of Matured Virginia, but made exclusively from the best Empire leaf of Virginia type

- per oz. 2/7

PURPLE SQUARES

Curries. The ever popular spun-cut. Little discs of tobacco ready for the pipe. Flavour some and long-lasting—per oz. 2/7

MIXTURES

BLUE SQUARES

A perfectly balanced mixture of finest Virginia and choicest Eastern tobaccos. The indoor smoker's ideal. Rich in natural aroma, but not heady. Medium cut

- per oz. 2/11

GREEN SQUARES

A mixture of the old original Scottish type of medium strength and medium cut, made from selected Empire leaf

- per oz. 2/7



GLASTONBURY PREDICTIONS

Watch Aries

Since Aries the Ram of the Zodiac was recently seen winking, I have naturally been keeping a sharp lookout for new signs and portents. At midnight last Tuesday my astral seismographic instruments on Glastonbury Tor recorded a series of emphatic nods.



A nod is as good as a wink from Aries. I am therefore able to disclose that the end of the war is nearer than it was last Hallowe'en, and that first class 'Morlands Glastonburys' Sheepskin-lined Boots will be ready for the post-war market.



NO DRIVING
BOOTS UNTIL
AFTER THE WAR

MORLANDS GLASTONBURYS

★ Meanwhile, take care of those you have until post-war improved styles arrive.

SAVE FUEL

*Keep warm inside
with*



CROSSE & BLACKWELL'S

MOCK TURTLE • VEGETABLE • MEAT • MULLIGATAWNY • CONSOMME



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCV No. 5363

November 17 1943

Charivaria

POSSIBILITIES of Nazi peace moves are said to be increasing. There is a rumour current throughout Germany that Hitler is on friendly terms with one of his generals.

In view of the cost of living there is some talk of raising to five guineas the penalty for pulling a train communication-cord.



A Hard Case

"That puts the difficulty in the way of a world organisation for keeping the peace in a nutshell."
Dundee paper.

A private soldier says that strawberry jam that appears on the camp menu is very thin. His theory is that the officers get the pips.

A correspondent says he recently travelled from Glasgow to London and had no difficulty in obtaining a taxi at King's Cross. However scarce they are in Glasgow, it seems a long time to stand for one.

Mussolini coughed several times when rendering a speech recently. It is said that Wilhelmstrasse officials are not inclined to take a serious view of these interpolations in their script.

It is said that Hitler has been trying to reinstate Mussolini for all he is worth. He'll have to make a far greater effort than that.

The German people are reported to be asking many pertinent questions, particularly about the end of the war with Russia. What the Fuehrer dreads is their asking pertinent questions about the beginning of the war with Russia.



In view of the Red Army's continued advance on the Eastern Front there is every reason to hope that Goebbels will soon be preparing the German people for the Wehrmacht's triumphal victory march on Berlin.

By all reports Germany has discovered another minority. It is still officially known as the Nazi Party.

"Hunting is not what it was," says a correspondent. Land girls are too busy to open gates.

A boy in America charged with highway robbery attributed his crimes to jitter-bugging and the juke box. Apparently the war has hit Hollywood very hard.



It is announced that full-time members of the A.R.P. will continue their duties for some time after the war. Householders showing unlighted windows will be warned for the first offence.

It was disclosed last week that on October 27th fog completely blacked out London for the second night in succession. You remember. So long as you pointed your torch away from you nobody could see your face behind your hand.

Exercise before Bed

"Shortly before retiring, make a hole in the centre of the fire with a poker about 4in. to 6in. in diameter . . ."

Letter in daily paper.

"Try staying at home of an evening and hold your wife's hand," advised a magistrate recently. This is very effective in preventing her playing the "Warsaw Concerto," but in these times is it right to interfere with her knitting?

At the Bar

THE man said that what he said was, and he would say it again to anybody, even if it was the Prime Minister himself, or the Lord Mayor of London. He repeated this twice, and I had no reason to doubt the inflexibility of his determination. The bar was very full and hot and noisy, a canary was singing and the radio was on. Every now and then you could hear the announcer accomplishing with evident pride the pronunciation of a Russian or an Italian name. The thing that amazed me was the ability shown by everybody to select and pick up again his own glass of beer after putting it down in its own wet ring for a while. No doubt there were many failures but I did not observe them. The man was large and robust, he had red cheeks, and the collar of his overcoat was turned up. His companion was slightly taller and thinner, his cheeks were pale, he wore a slightly cynical look and seemed to be nursing a secret sorrow. It needed no detective to guess their occupation. They were paid fire-watchers. Philosophy, science, æsthetics owe a great debt to such men. They think deeply, and study the stars. But at this moment they were ceasing to shoulder the sky. They were drinking their ale.

"You mark my words," the man went on, and just as I was making a rough calculation of the number of words that have to be marked every night in the public-houses of London he turned suddenly to me.

"Don't you agree with me, mister?" he said. I was of course at once upon my guard. It is not safe simply to say "Yes" on these occasions and turn, ever so gently, away. The defences of the cadaverous man in the controversy had been saturated, and a new target was desired. I was alone in that awful loneliness of a packed saloon.

"About what?" I said cautiously.

"'Itler."

"I expect so."

It was not enough.

"What I was saying to this gentleman was you mark my words 'Itler's going to repent."

"Repent?"

"That's what I was saying. Only the other day 'Itler was saying in the papers 'I'm a deeply relidjus man.' You take my meaning?"

"Not exactly," I said.

"'Itler's going to say, 'Boys, I know I done it, but I was misled. I was all for attacking these Bolshies, like what you are, but I didn't go the right way about it. I was puffed up in the pride of my 'eart, and done it in the

name of the German nation, instead of what I ought to 'ave done it in the name of the Christian relidjun. Now I goes down on me knees and asks forgiveness for being mistook."

As he said this he crouched slightly, and for a moment I thought he was going to give an exact imitation of Hitler kneeling on the floor among the cigarette-ends and asking for the indulgence of heaven. But the moment passed. He stood upright again, and repeated his question.

"Don't you agree with me, mister?"

I said I hadn't thought of it, and pretended to meditate as I sipped my beer.

"Anyhow he wouldn't get off that way."

"Don't you be too sure about that, mister. There's a lot of people going round would say 'Pore man. Very likely he's right, only he ought to have gone about it different.' That's what old 'Itler's going to do. You mark my words."

I marked them. Some evasive action seemed necessary.

"What about his friends?" I said after a pause.

"Don't you take on about his friends. 'Itler's going to say 'I'm a guilty man. And I repent of what I done. And what I done was done right only I ought to have did it different.' That's what 'Itler's going to do."

I looked at the canary. An inspiration came to my aid.

"One of the papers said that Hitler and his pals would try to escape in a submarine to Japan."

"Ar," said the man.

Clearly I had started a new train of thought.

"Like Jonah in the whale."

This seemed to puzzle him.

"It would be great sport harpooning that submarine."

He reflected for a while. But only for a short while.

"You don't 'arpoon submarines, you depth-charges them."

"It was just a manner of speaking," I said. "It would be rather funny if the submarine threw him up on the shores of Japan and he began preaching repentance to the people of Tokyo."

"Who said anything about Tokyo?"

"I did."

"You've gorn off the subbie, that's what you've done."

"Perhaps I have," I said. "But it would be rather curious if it happened all the same. Hitler might say 'The German people have misunderstood me, like the rest of the world. The only thing I wanted to do was to attack Bolshevism. I have repented of the troubles that followed, and now I must leave Europe and become a great prophet in the Far East.' But I think we should get him in the end."

"Ar," said the man. "But what I say is—"

Important discussions of this kind in the bars of London public-houses are often interrupted suddenly, instead of ending, like the Moscow Conference, in the complete agreement on all points of all the parties concerned.

Two customers pushed their way in between us and I was separated, perhaps for ever, from the German Fuehrer's theology and his new method of reforming the world.

I finished my beer in solitude. But the topic of conversation must have changed rapidly before I went out into the night, for as I pushed open the swing door I heard the man with the red face saying "Mind you, I don't hold with birching a pore little boy, whatever he done."

He was addressing the newcomers. The tall man seemed to have as little real interest in Hereford as in Hitler's soul. The canary was still singing.

EVOR.





THE TRI-PARTITE PACT

["The work confronting the United Nations' Relief and Rehabilitation Administration is immediate and urgent. As it now begins its operations, many of the most fertile food regions of the world . . . have been stripped by the practice of the dictatorships to make themselves self-sustaining on other peoples' lands. . . ."—President Roosevelt.]



"Congratulations, Sergeant Snooks, upon the result of the new Assault Course."

English Islands or Lost Off Labrador

VII

YESTERDAY we had a big adventure. The wind fell away altogether. For about ten minutes the ghost of the sun showed himself, the fog left the rim of the Punch Bowl and we could see two small islands outside. After much debate and waiting for better things still, a wind from the west or a blaze of sun, the Captain had the anchor up and I said good-bye to the Seal Islands.

It was exciting to move through that narrow gate at last.

But outside only the tops of the nearest islands showed. Over all the sea was the same grey soup. In this labyrinth of rocks and reefs and icebergs it was not good enough, the Captain said. We came back. Soon we couldn't see the sides, or even the entrance, of the Punch Bowl at all.

To-day it is as thick as ever. We have now been stuck for seven (or eight?) days.

What charming folk these Newfoundlanders are! In all these dreary days I have not heard a word of wrath or seen a sign of wear. And though we are not in an open boat or a Berlin bomber, continual fog and rain and idleness are wearing. They are the best-tempered, best-mannered people walking. I do not believe I ever heard a Newfoundlanderswear. Oh, yes, I heard a lobster-fishery inspector call a lobster fisherman a "son of a dog" because he had not taken up his pots for the close season. But even that, I believe, was to impress the English visitor with the efficiency of Newfoundland State fishery inspection.

They are gay, good-humoured and generous; tolerant, temperate, tough,

God-fearing, sabbath-keeping, and law-abiding. Fond of holidays, but fine workers; politically maddening but personally the salt of the earth. They will give you all they have got, or put you up for the winter in a bad year, but cannot bear the thought of rates; they will subscribe the earth for a man who has fallen through the rickety bridge but do nothing at all about mending the bridge. Every man can build his own house, his own boat; but he won't build a parish council. They have all the crafts except the political. They are devoted to "the Old Country" (however much they may reproach her). I have heard moving accounts of the black days when France fell, and most people over here thought that we were done too. The Newfoundlanders—never. They would not hear of it.

And though this may sound like an Englishman's conceit—I say that they are intensely English. Their names are English, their ancestors were English, and after all these generations their accents are English still. What is more important, their way of thinking, of living, is English. The great go-getting twanging continent next-door has not got the Newfoundland yet.

The names. One "out-port" is full of Pilgrims, the next of Pomeroyes. Our Captain is Sims—a big solid, sagacious head and a big solid, capacious belly in a never-changing magenta jersey. His brother, Herb Sims, the engineer, wears a green jersey and a dark red jockey cap for ever. Then there is Jack, the cook, and Reggie, the cabin-boy, his son. There is Andy, who swears that his father, and his grandfather, and his great-grandfather were men of Devon, but talks, as so many do, with a perfect Irish accent. And there is the Padre, who has a West-Country speech I cannot quite identify.

If you fell blindfold by parachute on to any part of Newfoundland, and listened to the talk, you might say you were in Devonshire, in Dorset, Cornwall or Somerset, or Yorkshire; you might say you were in Ireland or Scotland (not often in Wales). But you would never say you were in Canada or the United States.

And when you think that all day long they are bombarded by the "Voice of America" (a grand institution, by the way) on the wireless, and even by American announcers at the B.B.C.; when you think that the island is full of American and Canadian Service men (bless them all); when you think that they use and talk dollars all day, and never see an English coin, an English paper or magazine, it is amazing how little that mighty continent has touched them. Indeed, I think they talk less American than our young people at home.

Certainly they talk much more good English—and old English. It is good to hear the Padre tell the cook that he has "a civil sea" for dinner-time—a mild sea that will not capsize the crockery. Like some West-Country folk, they are "to Twillingate" not "at". A "swatch" or "swatchway" is an old East Coast word for a passage between sand- or mud-banks (*e.g.*, the Jenkin Swatch opposite Southend): here a "swatch" is a hole or passage in the ice from which you may take seals or fish. A water-barrel is a "gully" or a "covel". A dry piece of kindling-wood with the end cut into shavings not detached from the stick

is called a "bavin". A path between two cliffs, or even fences, is a "drung". A space, grassed or pebbly, where nets or fish are spread, is a "bawn". Walking slowly is "marling". An armful of dry cod-fish is a "yaffle" of fish. A few sticks or boards carried on the shoulder may be a "faddle" ("fardel"—conjectures Haddock). Some talk of a "scheme of wind"—a high wind down the bay. Small muddy ponds in boggy country are "flashets". A thing frozen may be "frore solid". White froth along the beach formed by the breaking of waves is "flobber". A light squall of rain or snow is a "dweye of rain" or a "snow dweye". You will hear that the ailing grandfather is "nice and sick" or "nice and bad" this morning. North is "No'th" (or "Node") as it is among the East Coast bargemen, and sometimes you hear the East Coast "that" (for "it"). Everywhere the vowel sound in "all" or "haul" is a soft sort of "ahl"—not the American "arl" at all. You "hahl a trahl"—haul a trawl, or long-line, to see if you have caught fish. Sometimes you "haul a trap" and find nothing in it: this is a "water-haul". "H" is seldom missing at the beginning of a word (Cockney is about the only English dialect that does not dwell here); but it often disappears in the middle, and "three" is always "t'ree". Ice formed on the shore-line from beating seas or the rise and fall of the tide, and hanging from the rocks is "ballycatters" (? belly catchers).

There are many other strange words and tricks of speech which I shall look up in my great *Oxford Dictionary* if I ever see it again: and I shall expect to find them.*

And there are many habits of mind and life whose origin and counterpart I shall not have to seek in any dictionary.

All this is highly important, politically. For when men discuss, as so many discuss, the Future of Newfoundland, one of the possibilities mentioned is Confederation with Canada—or even the United States. There are many things to be said about that which had better not be said now. But some easy thinkers, half-baked-swallowers and anything-for-a-quiet-lifers, will tell you that Newfoundland is "naturally" and "logically" so much a part of the continent that it would be sensible to accept and make it so.

It depends what you mean by "naturally". Geography is not everything: or Northern Ireland and

Southern Ireland would be one big brother, and Southern Ireland would not have a German Embassy in Dublin at this moment. (And what about Malta?) All I will say now—for the foul hag Discretion is wildly plucking at my elbow—is this. The Newfoundlanders no more "belong" to the American continent, in any sense, than I do.

Nor, with great respect to everyone, do they wish to.

Five-thirty. Supper. No complaints: but I am beginning to weary of sea-gull.

A. P. H.

My Love is a Mobile Woman

MY love is a Mobile Woman—
A fact that I regret;
In the past fortnight she
has been

At work in Kent and Aberdeen
And York and Somerset.
She's ordered up and down the land,
Always to some new spot:
My love's a Mobile Woman, and
I wish that she were not.

I do not find it easy
To fix my loving gaze
On one who may be briskly sent
To Perth or Hove or Stoke-on-Trent
Or Walton-on-the-Naze.
Mind you, I think my love is grand—
I couldn't love her more:
But she's a Mobile Woman, and
That is (I feel) a bore. . . .

My love is a Mobile Woman
No longer now; for she
Wrote to the Ministry to ask
For leave to do instead some task
Of Non-Mobility.
They have been willing to allow
A change-over: and so
She is a Bus-Conductress now,
And finds it rather slow.

Grasping the Nettle

"Manstein, therefore, must now bring back these forward troops of his—if he can. No doubt he will try to stand on the Bug."—*Daily paper*.

In Other Words

"New book left at the Public Library, title 'Come and Get It.' Owner call at library."—*Advt. in local paper*.

*I have found several—*e.g.* frore (1250), bavin (1528), bawn (1537), covel (1250).

More Field Notes

I THINK I said before that strange things happen to us naturalists. One of the strangest things that ever happened to me is a second cousin named Bertha, a woman with a genius for melancholy, who went to live in Châlons-sur-Marne because she so disliked Huddersfield, and came back to live in Huddersfield because of her great hatred for Châlons-sur-Marne. Twice a year this gaunt harbinger of gloom stays with me a few days to ensure that woe prevails, and her passion for superstition persuaded me last week to try out on her a little gentle field-therapy. Staff talks with Sammy Gullinger preceded the treatment. He is not a very clever child, but he has an extraordinary way with the creatures of hedgerow and coppice.

Soon after she arrived I took Cousin Bertha for a walk. We went slowly up a winding lane with a high hedge above it on one side.

"Mr. Robinson met a Member of Parliament who told him we should be lucky if the war was over in fifteen years," she said. Hardly were the words out of her mouth when a large magpie floated downwind across our path.

"One for sorrow," she muttered, keenly.

"Two for joy!" I countered, knowing that Sammy wouldn't fail me, and he didn't. Cousin Bertha's face brightened a shade.

"Perhaps ten years will see the first phase through," she conceded, and we walked on slowly. Sammy moved quicker.

"One for sorrow," said Cousin Bertha, as another bird flew over.

"Two for joy!" I cried confidently. She was visibly shaken.

"It would be nice if we had only to endure another five years," she said. I decided to allow this new mood silence in which to burgeon.

"One for sorrow," chanted Cousin Bertha again. But this time she was right, for before I could make any rash prophecy a wild thrashing came from the bank ahead of us and Sammy fell noisily into the lane. In his hand was a large cardboard box from which a wealth of angry birdsong emerged.

Sammy Gullinger's strange powers were more than fully possessed by my Uncle Athelstane, who added to them great social courage and a rare breadth of unorthodoxy. I have just been refreshing my memory on the details of a remarkable scene enacted in 1906 on the banks of the Itchen.

My uncle, having been invited to fish one of the best stretches, arrived at the station carrying a small crate covered in green baize. His host expressed surprise that he should have brought so much tackle, but Uncle Athelstane replied that he liked to make sure of his fish, and together they drove to the water.

"What's the limit?" asked my uncle, as his host left him on the best beat.

"Six brace," was the answer, "but there won't be a hatch till this afternoon. You'll do well if you get a fish before lunch."

The tranquil valley of the Itchen is not often desecrated by the sounds of brawling, and when these came downstream on the breeze not long afterwards the host hurried to investigate. He was surprised to find a good-sized bird engaged in a death-struggle with an old gentleman of military appearance whom my uncle was beating about the head with a landing-net. The bird had a nice trout in its beak, and there were eleven others lying on the bank.

"Tell this blackguard to leave my cormorant alone!" roared my uncle.

"Athelstane, this is the act of a cad," said his host coldly.

"Fiddlesticks!" shouted my uncle. "Any fool can cast a dry fly after half an hour, but that bird represents a whole year of my life."

In the ensuing altercation they all three fell into the river, an accident of which the cormorant took advantage to exceed its limit by two splendid fish.

I have just carried out an experiment which appears to prove beyond question that cats can see in the dark. An elderly animal of respectable habit was recently left to me by an old lady to whom the cat and I were devoted, her sister who shared her house disliking the cat almost as cordially as the cat and I disliked her.

I put the animal into an unlit room fitted with a microphone, and excluded the possibility of its going to sleep by getting Mrs. Amworthy to beat loudly on a tea-tray at intervals outside the door, while I stationed myself beside her. By means of an exterior winch I had installed I caused an enlarged photograph of the cat's departed mistress to descend into the room. Instantly the loudspeaker at my side was full of purring, rich with surprise and delight. The moment I wound the picture up again the purring stopped.

After waiting five minutes I then lowered an excellent and repellent likeness of the woman from whose harsh regime the cat had so lately escaped. I expected a torrent of abuse at this unwelcome entry. None came. Disappointed, I opened the door. The cat was dead.

Science had claimed another martyr. It was tragic but I think conclusive.

Mrs. Amworthy has not taken kindly to my intention of training a fleas' circus of my own. Unfortunately I once told her about the circus I saw in Vienna, which was rudely disbanded when twenty stone of German professor slipped and fell into the arena, and how I was subsequently bitten to pieces by the trick-cyclist.

"There'll be a lot less flying trapeze than hunting all over the house for the little blighters," she snorted. She gets worse every day.

"I see it as part of my war effort to prove that honest Surrey fleas are more than the intellectual match of any bunch of decadent enemy aliens," I told her.

"I can just see them playing 'Rule, Britannia!' on the harp," said she.

Eventually I had to promise a special turn in which the whole company sprang to attention at the name of Amworthy, and she seemed a little mollified.

ERIC.

Latin

DURING the first hour we go to the dining-room for Latin.

Having retained its hotel fittings, this room is less austere than the class-rooms, which have lost the comfort they once knew as lounges and bar-parlours.

Teaching there offers this advantage—that it is too civilized to permit the use of ink. So the first period passes in agreeable cleanliness.

On the other hand, something of its languid ease is communicated to the atmosphere of the class—a consideration which may be accounted favourable or otherwise. My own feelings on this subject vary from day to day.

I begin by pointing out to Hastings that *flumen* is neuter, which he has overlooked in putting into Latin: "There are many rivers in Italy."

He exclaims indignantly: "Oh, of course! How potty!"

Ignoring this ambiguity, I turn to Craggs and Peel, who are supposed to be engaged in mastering the Passive Voice. They are being conspicuously passive where Latin verbs are concerned, but very active in a dispute over a pencil-box. I settle the dispute summarily, tell them they will be "heard" in a very few minutes, and turn my attention to three exercise-books which Wilkins, Tupper and Rooke have been struggling to hold under my nose simultaneously.

They are in the early stages of the language and are confused, because yesterday we had only subjects and objects to consider, but this morning there are genitives, datives, and ablatives.

Strange things have been happening to the Belgians, who should have wounded the forces of Cotta with arrows, but appear instead to have wounded the arrows of the forces or else to have become casualties themselves. I underline the errant cases and am gently explaining the mistakes when Wilkins creates a diversion by asking who Cotta was.

I reveal the little I know of Cotta and earn thereby a disbelieving stare from Tupper, who murmurs: "My father says he was an Australian bowler."

I decline to pursue the matter further, especially as I am being begged by Craggs and Peel to hear them the Passive of *amo*.

They relate to me in a mournful mixture of pronunciations that they are being loved, were being loved, and will be loved but show some diffidence over "have been loved," "had been loved," and "will have been loved." They have barely concluded this ragged recital when there is a knock and a boy puts his head in:

"Please, sir, may Peel go to music?"

I agree, and Peel rises with a smile which is more convincing than mine, for this means that to-morrow Craggs will know the Passive of *amo*, and Peel will not.

And my class of six is already at three different stages of Latin.

Peel, collecting his books, drops his pencil-box on Craggs' foot and is informed of the circumstances without reserve. I come down heavily on the consequent altercation, disliking pencil-boxes, if possible, more than ever.

Peel departs, and the matron's ginger kitten takes advantage of his exit to stalk in with tail erect.

I am fond of kittens, but I know by experience that the presence of the species during Latin is a fatal distraction. So I direct Rooke to expel the visitor, which he does to the



"You remember you asked what 72 was, and I said 'Big Guns in Action,' and you said 'Oh!' Well, I was looking at the wrong one. 72 is called 'In a Barrack Room'."

accompaniment of sympathetic endearments, charged with implied reproaches for my fussiness.

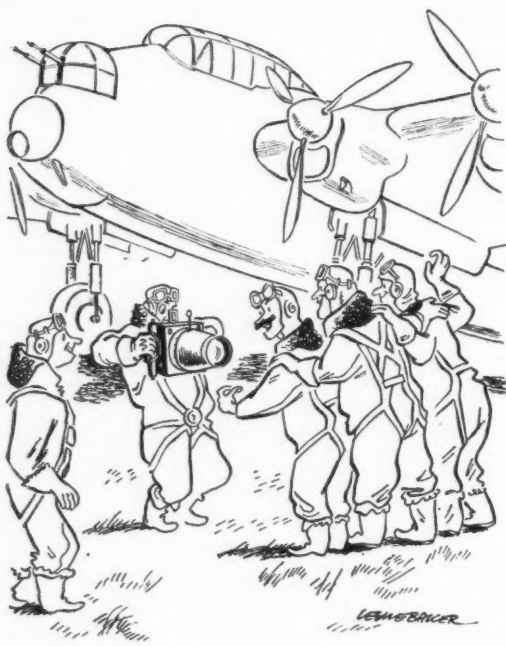
It is time to attend to Hastings and the rivers of Italy, but Wilkins and Tupper are upon me with a revised version of the action between Cotta and the Belgians. They have even plunged into a rendering of "the forces were reporting the victory to Cotta."

By the time I have dealt with the terminal variations on these themes, Hastings and Craggs have united in solving the question of the rivers in their own fashion. This they have accomplished by sliding open the lids of all the pencil-boxes they can find

and constructing enough pontoon bridges to bring General Montgomery's men across every river from Naples to the Alps.

I am still discoursing acidly on their achievement when the second bell rings.

This means I must open my mark-book to record the morning's progress, and I have not finished doing so when a perfunctory knock heralds the entry of the next class. They surge in, accompanied by the ginger kitten protesting plaintively against my morbid zeal for a dead language, as a result of which the mouse behind the piano is still alive.



"Come along, George—he's just got one more to finish the roll."

What Do I Do . . . ?

(A Battle Song for the Home Front)

WHAT do I do if my favourite gnu
Should suffer from colds in the head . . . ?
Write to the Scottish Department of Bees
Enclosing (in triplicate) suitable fees,
And after six months they will forward your pleas
To the Walnut Controller instead.
But don't get impatient or worry or scold,
Keep perfectly cool,
Remember this rule—
"Do nothing until you are told."

What do I do if I wait in a queue
For buses that never arrive . . . ?
Don't travel; or walk, if it's not very far;
Or go (if you had any petrol) by car;
And *always* remember how lucky you are
To be (by permission) alive.
So take for your motto this precept of gold:
Whatever your fate
Just patiently wait,
"Do nothing until you are told."

What do I do if the water comes through
The ceiling, and drenches my aunt . . . ?
Send for some forms to the Pineapple Board,
And when your requests are entirely ignored
Try asking the Marmalade Pool to afford
Some help. When you find that it can't,
Be fearless! and act on this principle bold:
(What do I do . . . ?
What do I do . . . ?)
"Do nothing until you are told."

What do I do if I take a poor view
Of everything that you say . . . ?
Recalcitrant patriot, don't be absurd;
Such people as you should be seen and not heard.
Have faith in this ever-invincible Word
And troubles will vanish away:
Come, citizen armies, your banners unfold!
And bearing them high
March forth to the cry
"Do nothing whatever until you are told."

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

I

WHEN I am got down by science, a great attraction for me is what The Drama has. It forms what some kinds of people call "a nice hobby" and other kinds "a true vocation." My life plan is to write one very, very long play rather than a number of short ones, where you have to fit everything into a plot, long works being more apt to have a theme. So far I have produced mainly fragments, intending to link them up by harangues in verse, but as this takes longer to write than prose I always have many more parts than joins. The fragment below was composed mentally. I was doing an experiment to find out how long B. Smith could hang head downwards from a window without losing his *joie de vivre*. All I had to do was to hold his ankles, and this gave me plenty of time for composition. The experiment proved inconclusive, owing to his being forcibly fed with worms by a demented blackbird.

MAGGIE, THE BELLE OF THE BUNCH

(The scene is a low cellar in which Mr. HEPPLEWHITE, TODDY and THE OLD 'UN are playing bridge. At their feet is a trussed CAPTIVE. For convenience they have made him dummy.)

MR. HEPPLEWHITE. Every single morning of my life I have respired for twelve minutes before an open window, and to this I attribute the bonniness of my mien.

TODDY. There's a strength of mind for you. There's an inflexibility.

THE OLD 'UN. Hearts it is. Nark me, boys. All down King's Road and twice round the markets.

[The CAPTIVE moans and writhes. MR. HEPPLEWHITE kindly bends over to him and whispers the score.

TODDY. You can't get over it. Someone's knocking at the door.

MR. HEPPLEWHITE. If they are really anxious to visit us they will come in. If, on the other hand, they are merely passing an idle hour they will in course of time depart.

Enter MRS. SAM KIRKWOOD

MRS. SAM KIRKWOOD. Well, lads, not much comfort here. Look at all those bare walls, you poor things. I must see what I can do. I can let you have a print of Manet's "Bar at the Folies Bergères," quadruple size. (Pointing to the CAPTIVE) Who is this?

TODDY. That's more than I know. The last tenants asked us to keep an eye on him.

THE OLD 'UN. I keep on leading and nobody don't take notice. The cards keep piling up where I've led. It's a rum go, rummer nor moonshine.
[At this moment the VICAR calls, at first shrilly from

SOCKS

"DEAR MR. PUNCH,—It may comfort you to know that my favourite pair of socks bears the cheery label of your Comforts Fund.

"These socks were given to me in the beginning of the war and served through the Flanders campaign and more than twelve months of trapesing across deserts in the Middle East. The wool is matted and apparently quite hole-proof, in fact I feel that a testimonial parodying the old Pears Soap tramp advertisement is their just due—something on the lines of 'since then I have worn no other.'

"Thank you, Mr. Punch."

(Signed) G. W. A., *Capt.*

In answer to a request for permission to publish the above we received the following:

"As the Duke of Wellington would say:—

'Publish and be blessed.'

Donations will be most gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

outside the room, then more gently, when he has come in.

MR. HEPPLEWHITE. Do you not, sir, consider Mrs. Sam Kirkwood, here, a fine figure of a woman?

VICAR. Champion.

MRS. SAM KIRKWOOD. Well, Mr. Hepplewhite, how are you getting on with training your vampire bats?

MR. HEPPLEWHITE. I have to report that their work is only fair. They spell out the cards with alacrity but persist in adding an "e" at the end of words. I suspect their previous owner read them far too much Chaucer. Possibly, however, I have been remiss about their feeding. Our Journal lays emphasis on getting the blood groups right.

[The CAPTIVE, having quietly gnawed through his bonds, now stands up and displays the frayed ends with simple pride.]

TODDY. There's skill and perseverance for you. How do you feel?

CAPTIVE. The incisors ache a bit, but I managed to use the molars for a good deal of the work. The canines, being gold-crowned, I avoided as far as possible.

MRS. SAM KIRKWOOD. Do your bats punctuate or only spell?

MR. HEPPLEWHITE. One of them, Lola del Montego, has progressed as far as the colon, but the others are still mastering the full stop.

THE OLD 'UN. Man called Fiddlegrove we used to know kept a little dogcart what was drawn by bloodhounds. Nosing round the Borough they'd go till they got a trail and then nothing 'ud stop 'em till the cart got caught in a doorway.

TODDY. Bats aren't bloodhounds. It's either confusion or irrelevance that's gripped you, one or the other of them, as you might say.

THE OLD 'UN. Who might say? None what I've ever knowned would a' said that, not one nor 'em.

MRS. SAM KIRKWOOD. Go on with you both! Just a pair of schoolboys, that's what you are. Shall I

cook you something? I've got the dear old Primus all ready in the hall. What about a spot of paprika?

MR. HEPPLEWHITE. The question inevitably arises, what have we done to deserve such generosity. One might answer, if in the mood, damn all.

CAPTIVE. Can anyone tell me whether the expression is "taken for a ride" or "taken for a bride"?

THE OLD 'UN. Our teacher always taught us to say "a pride of lions." Not a flock of 'em it wasn't, not on your life-o. He were a good teacher, but they downed him.

MRS. SAM KIRKWOOD. Who downed him, you sweet old card?

THE OLD 'UN. Boilses. Here, there and everywhere they was. Didn't leave 'im, they didn't, till he ran away to join the railway. Some said it were the smoke and some said as it were the dark in the tunnels as cured him. What's trumps?

TODDY. We've been and forgotten our appointment: there's punctuality for you.

MR. HEPPLEWHITE. This excellent Vicar is still with us, so we can begin now, albeit tardily. Well, sir, are you prepared to join with us in a petition to the Borough Council, and, if so, what subject would you propose? We are but beginners, seeking practice and avid for sympathetic criticism.

CAPTIVE. Madam, I feel we are *de trop*. There is a lecture in the neighbourhood which we might well attend, leaving our friends to their labours. It is a lecture on "The Destruction of Etching Plates by Ali Bobadil's Method." May I accompany you thither?

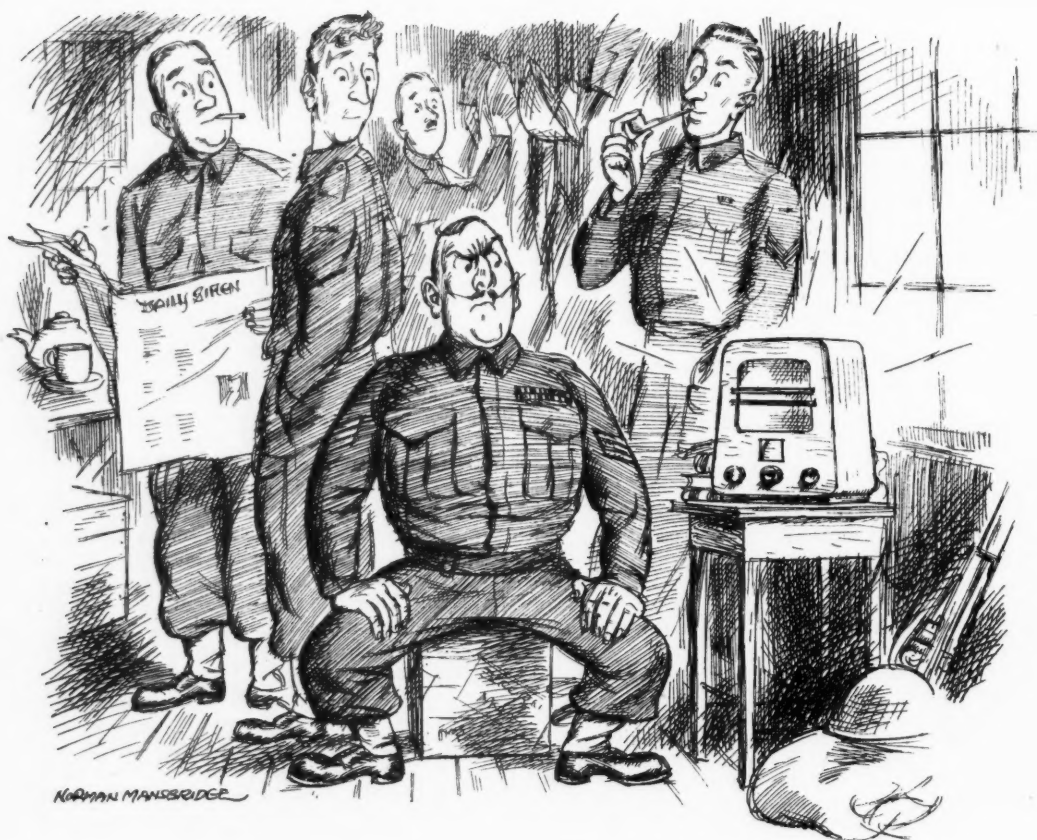
[Exeunt CAPTIVE and MRS. SAM KIRKWOOD, the latter with a laughing glance backward as she passes through the door. Somewhere in the distance a gramophone plays an arrangement of Ravel's "Bolero" for three unaccompanied tenors.]

FINIS



"The butcher asked me if I'd drop a couple of chops in at Moat Farm."

Mr. Punch learns with regret of the death of Mr. Charles Harrison, a great many of whose drawings appeared in these pages from the year 1895 onwards. The last one was in the issue of December 26th, 1934.



"Here is your request number, Sergeant Smart—'The Teddy Bears' Picnic'!"

Our Village

OUR village, that's to say not Thomas Hood's village, that he wrote about without any metre,

But our village, is probably much the same as it was pre-war except that it may be a little neater.

It contains one hundred and seventeen houses—four public and the rest more or less private;

Six were destroyed by bombs two years ago, and one by a tank last May, as the man couldn't drive it.

There is a bus that runs to the market-town twice a day, a very peculiar old conveyance,

Two garages, two telephone kiosks, and four cigarette-machines with service in abeyance.

The vicarage is a very dull survival from early Victorian times or some of those drab ages,

But it has a beautiful lawn in front, which produced this year one hundred and thirteen cabbages.

The only other large house is occupied by a retired pawn-broker, by name Percival Pillage;

He is a colonel in the Home Guard, a warden, and about everything else he could be in the village.

There is also a village hall which has no railings now, but the ground's neat and tidy;

The Home Guard meet there on Sundays, the W.R.I. on Tuesdays, and there's a dance every Friday.

The schoolmaster's house was only half built, or thereabouts, at the beginning of the war;

He's the National Savings expert, the organist, the registrar, and is in the Royal Observer Corps.

He has a wife and four children, two dogs, one cat, and a number of last-war disabilities,

But as his house is not finished, of course none of them can occupy it until it is.

J. B. N.



THE GOOD FAIRY

"Don't forget that any money you can save from housekeeping belongs by right to me."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, November 9th.—House of Lords: Youth Has Its (Highland) Fling. House of Commons: Goes Home.

Wednesday, November 10th.—House of Commons: A Sort of Adjournment.

Thursday, November 11th.—House of Commons: Mr. Eden Tells—nearly—All.

Tuesday, November 9th.—Mr. CHURCHILL entered the House of Commons to-day like a Little Ray of Sunshine, and beamed around on one and all. The House is at least as attentive to his moods as the normally cautious school form is to the moods of the "Head," and it swiftly detected the cordiality (not to say joviality) of the O.C. Treasury Bench, and proceeded to bask in the sunshine of his smile.

If there seem to be mixed metaphors in that paragraph, your scribe can only plead that it has been a mixed-up sort of day—what there was of it.

Mr. CHURCHILL's benevolence knew no bounds—none at all. At the end of Questions, indeed, the P.M. showed his kindness and his versatility by drafting (in the hearing of the entire House) a hostile amendment to the Address for the coming new Session.

As it is a tradition that the Government has to resign if an amendment to the Address is carried, kindness and a desire to please could scarcely go further. But as the amendment was drafted for Mr. JIMMY MAXTON and his Party (both of them), the risk of undue gnawing of the hand that fed them was not perhaps great. What happened was that Mr. MAXTON, asking for a debate on Newfoundland, complained that there was no opportunity for one in the normal way.

"There's always the Address," Mr. CHURCHILL pointed out, "and you might table an amendment regretting the Government's policy in Newfoundland."

This gesture was so generous that even resourceful Mr. MAXTON could not think of anything to say about it.

Mr. CHURCHILL proceeded to the incredible act of pulling the leg of that awful (if invariably charming and friendly) being, the Government Chief Whip, Mr. JAMES STUART.

Finding himself in deep water over some question of procedure, the Premier waved his glasses at the "Chief" and murmured: "He has not authorized me to say anything more!" Everybody laughed, and a laugh is to the man out of his Parliamentary depth the best of lifebelts.

Sir JAMES GRIGG, the War Minister, pressed about the refusal of a cup of tea to Land Girls by a Service club in highly-urban Wardour Street, London, W., gently pointed out that the club was for Service men and women, and added that he knew of no "agricultural operations in Wardour Street."

Mr. DAVID ROBERTSON, who sits as a Conservative for Streatham, got so indignant about this (for, seemingly, the Land Girls came from Streatham's broad acres) that he immediately dashed out of the House. That fact would not perhaps be worth recording,



JACK AND THE SALESTALK

Lord Woolton. "Down with it!"

[Exit to Ministry of Reconstruction.]

except that it had a vital bearing (as Sir JOHN ANDERSON might say) on the subsequent proceedings.

Questions over, the House proceeded to pass the report stage of the supplementary vote of credit totalling a miserable £1,250,000,000.

Mr. ROBERTSON had intended to have a "to-do" about an order raising the price of fish, also on the list, and, all through Questions had been metaphorically spitting on his hands, ready for the fray.

But Mr. Speaker put the vote to the House while the sentinel was still away from his post. Everybody looked at everybody else. Everybody bowed or nodded to everybody else, in an "After-you-sir" manner. Mr. Speaker's duty was plain: *No opposition, put it to the vote.*

This he did and a single voice said "AYE!" No voice at all said "No!" and so the vote was passed. All in, it took a couple of minutes—£625,000,000 a minute, which is even faster than it can be spent in this greatest of all Great Wars.

It only remains to add that Mr. ROBERTSON entered, flushed and breathless, just as the fateful words, "I think the Ayes have it," put an end to his hopes and passed the Fish Order into law.

And so, after seventy-five minutes, the Great Elected responded to the cry of the policeman: "Who goes home?"

In the House of Lords—which, as if in reproof, sat unusually long—the Duke of MONTROSE, aided by several other Scottish peers, raised a debate on the future of the Cadet Forces of the Navy, Army and R.A.F. He spoke eloquently, asking that the Forces should go on after the war, if only for their social value.

Lord HAREWOOD, in a rare intervention, urged the House to think of preventing, rather than winning, the "next war" and advocated the youth services as the surest means of securing that end.

Lord AIRLIE bluntly accused the nation of periodically "murdering" its finest young men by sending them forth to war untrained and ill-armed. This should never happen again, he said gravely, and there was a roar of approval.

Lord MOTTISTONE, cheerfully gate-crashing the pre-arranged list of speakers, laid it down that "Good boys are getting better and better, bad boys worse and worse." Rarely indeed was a member of a youth organization charged in the courts.

Whereupon Lord LATHAM also gate-crashed to remind the House that the undisciplined boys—good and bad—had won the Battle of Britain and many another crucial fight. (Husky cheers.)

Lord MUNSTER, for the Government, got in quickly while this atmosphere lasted, and promised that there'd always be a Cadet Force, run by the Service Departments. Which so pleased the Duke of MONTROSE that he invited his fellow-peers to gaze upon him and behold an optimist.

They did, and then went home.

Wednesday, November 10th.—Mr. DAVID ROBERTSON, still sore over missing the fish course yesterday, tried to get things put right, or at least to get the waiter told off. But Mr. Speaker is the sort of manager who does not take the view that the customer is always right—if he does



"Wonderful labour-savers, these old army trucks."

not happen to be. He therefore tersely told the objecting Member that if he had been where he ought to have been—namely, in the Chamber—he himself could have raised a debate.

This seemed to give no sort of satisfaction to the complainant.

The House went on to an adjournment debate, even though the adjournment was not immediately to follow. This somewhat peculiar arrangement was made in order to leave the morrow clear for a statement by Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, the Foreign Secretary, on his Moscow conference with Mr. MOLOTOV and Mr. CORDELL HULL.

Mr. ATTLEE announced, amid cheers, that Mr. EDEN had just arrived safely back in Britain, and would definitely appear.

Thursday, November 11th.—Mr. EDEN did appear, and he made what your scribe considers to be the best speech of his career. The House was crowded as it has seldom been for months. Mrs. EDEN, with Mrs. CHURCHILL by her side, sat in the Gallery, and opposite them was Field-Marshal SMUTS.

Mr. EDEN's story was clear and simple, and told in the racy flowing

style that he has hitherto (to the public loss) reserved for private gatherings.

The Moscow Conference, said he, would earn its place in history because it had brought new warmth and comfort to the relations between Britain, the United States and Soviet Russia. In a passage of Churchillian eloquence he expressed the view that if the three countries agreed there was no problem that could not be solved, while if they, unhappily, disagreed there was no international event that could not become an international problem.

Mr. MOLOTOV had been a wonderful chairman, Sir ARCHIBALD CLARK KERR, our Ambassador in Moscow, a wonderful paver-of-the-way, and Mr. CORDELL HULL a wonderful source of strength to everybody.

Of results he could say little. The best of them would be reported to the enemy in the form of shot and shell, and shocks and defeat. He thought

the report would be quite satisfactory—from our point of view.

Oh, by the way, he had, on the way home, seen M. MENEMENJOGLU, the Turkish Foreign Minister, and he had had talks. . . . And the Minister was reporting to his Cabinet. . . . And he was sure the House would . . . not expect him to say more.

The House clearly *did* expect more—but it laughed good-humouredly at this most effective essay in the art of leading up the garden.

And so to a debate which consisted almost entirely of bouquets gathered from that same garden. Which sent us all off for a brief recess in happy mood.

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Reversible

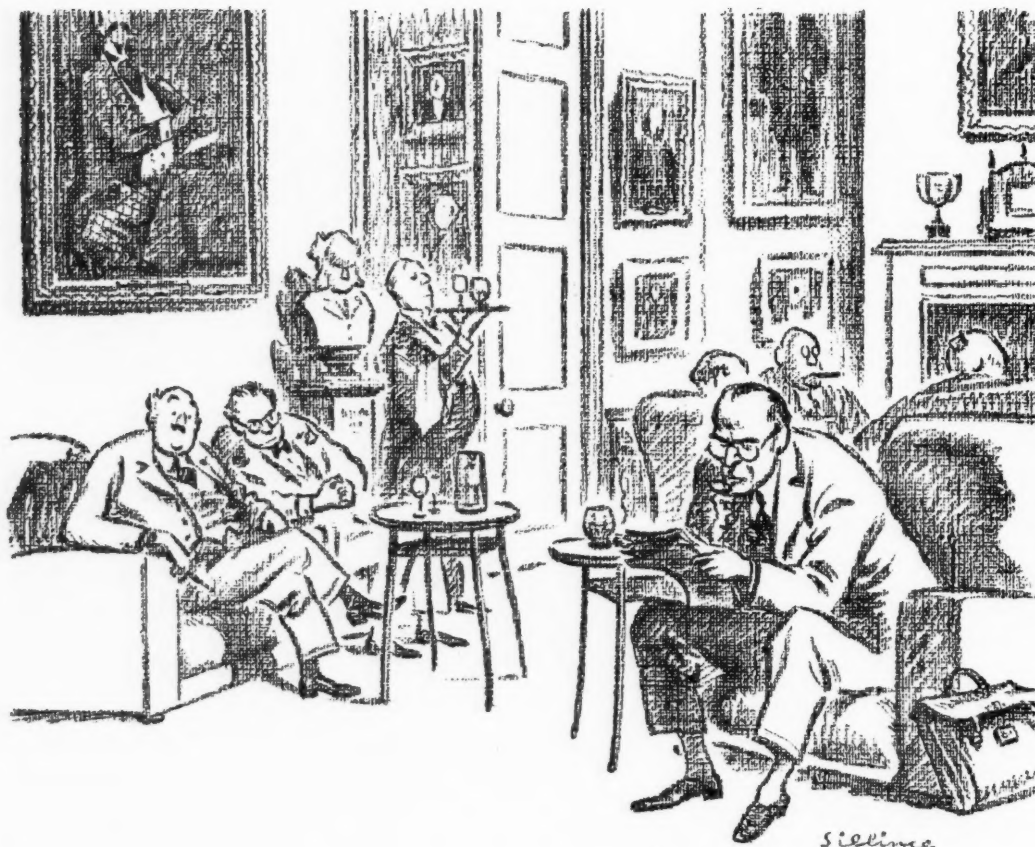
"NAZI PUSH IN ITALY GOES BACK"
Headline in "Sunday Pictorial."

o o

Faint Praise

"There is no situation to which it cannot address itself without vigour and ingenuity."—Daily paper's report of Mr. Churchill's speech on the House of Commons.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"He's one of those obscure back-room boys who have lately been so much in the limelight."

The Show Must Go On.

"I SUPPOSE the—er—the Equity, or whatever it is, won't mind?" said the Captain—"There's no—er—fee, I mean, sergeant."

I said I didn't think the Equity would mind.

"Monday at 2000 hours, then." The Captain gave me a formal look to remind me that my attendance was to be regarded as a parade, and I saluted myself out.

On Monday at 2000 hours I tried some of the doors of the N.A.A.F.I. Voices inside referred me to other doors. Finally, through deep mud which ran in thinly through the lace-holes of my boots, I reached another door. My torch revealed, in letters a foot high, the words "FIRE DOOR EMERGENCY ONLY KEEP OUT," and I was turning away when the inscription opened in the middle and a Chelsea

Pensioner looked out. "Come in, you're late," said the old gentleman, in a youngish voice. Inside, in the billiards-room, I saw that it was the Captain. He held up his huge moustache with both hands.

"Now, all we want from you," he said, "as compère, is just a joke or two with each announcement. The C.O.'s out in front, so—er—"

"Quite, sir," I said. "Is there any chance of my having a rough idea of the programme?"

He considered this, appeared to find it not unreasonable of me, and said, "Well, first half's variety—turns and—er—acts and so on. But the *second* half"—he gave me a quick look to make sure that he had my full attention—"the *second* half, we've got something new; quite new."

"Oh, good, sir."

"A play; a one-acter; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Waterloo*. You'll know it, I expect. Played it, no doubt. Very fine little thing. Irving played the old Corporal Brewster, you know. Aged ninety-six."

"Ah!" I said, realizing now the purport of the network of black lines drawn on the Captain's face. "The men should enjoy that."

"I want you to take great care in announcing the play. I want you to read out the cast. I've written the names in the prompt-copy here. 'Corporal Brewster, aged ninety-six'—see?"

"I see, sir. 'Corporal Brewster, aged ninety-six, played by Captain Biggsley.' How's that, sir?"

"That's fine, sergeant, splendid! Well, I must go and make up some of the others. No idea how to slap a bit

of paint on, some of these men." He turned suddenly and wrung my hand. "Best of good luck, sergeant!" he said.

He disappeared through a curtain composed of suspended ground-sheets.

A blare of brass came from somewhere. Cries of "Overture!" went up from beyond the ground-sheets. People were heard earnestly wishing each other the best luck in the world, adjuring each other to "knock 'em cold," to "shake 'em rigid." A man in ill-fitting dinner-jacket and khaki trousers ran up and seized my arm. "You're not the compère?" he said unhelpfully. "I am," I said. He turned his eyes upwards and uttered a thanksgiving. "Tell me," he said—"for mercy's sake, what's the first turn?" "I don't know," I said. "But you're the compère! You're announcing it!" "That's just it," I said.

A ginger-haired man in obvious Sports Stores cricket flannels ran past shouting, "Where's the Choral Society? Anybody seen the Choral Society?"

The blare of brass was now sorting itself out horribly into "Johnny Got a Zero." Sounds of absent-minded singing came from beyond the ground-sheets. I went and pushed my head through. "Anybody know who's on first?" I said. A plump girl in a tight electric-blue dress came and pushed her face in mine. "Do you think I need more two-and-a-half on?" "It's lovely," I said. "Who's on first?" "I'm on last before the interval," said the plump girl. The Captain, now almost hidden behind crêpe hair, looked up and said, "Time you were on, sergeant. Haven't got any spirit-gum with you, I suppose?"

I followed the sound of brass down a passage and presently found myself amongst a heterogeneously-attired cluster of artists, vying with each other to see through a hole in the scenery. There seemed nobody preparing to go on. I tapped a second-lieutenant respectfully on the arm. "Excuse me, sir," I said, "have you any idea who's on first?" He turned obligingly and called to a small private, "Who's on first, sir?" "Never mind about that, Willis," said the private, sternly—"you concentrate on your words for the Orderly Room sketch!" "Very good, sir," said the second-lieutenant and turned back to the hole in the scenery. "Hark at Ernie welting that cornet," he said.

The band became more strident. I sensed the impending conclusion of the overture. Desperate, I ran on to the stage. An artilleryman of Wellington's day was standing stage centre, holding the green curtains to. "Where the devil have you been?" he

demanded, thrusting a microphone at me, at the same time stripping from the instrument an officer's cap and continuing in a hoarse whisper, "First turn, Private Lowe, singing 'Because,' accompanied Lieutenant Singleton." There was a crash of cymbals. "Go on, man!" rasped the artilleryman, and leapt off the stage like a huge grasshopper.

I passed through the green curtains, smiling. A spotlight jerked, wavered, settled on my knees and feet. "Ladies and gentlemen," I said—"we have great pleasure in presenting to you to-night—"

At this point a set of red curtains were suddenly released in my face, cutting me off from my public. Voices off were heard, "The other rope, you B.F.!" "It's stuck, Sarge!" "Not that one, that's where the skylight's tied off!" I punched out blindly, found an opening, and advanced. The microphone refused to come with me at first; then I tugged, and it came away with a sense of permanent detachment.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I must apologize for the—"

"Speak up!" yelled the audience. "We can keep a secret!" "E's the whispering baritone!" "Give 'im a lozenge!"

I went on, louder. Somebody behind the curtain was hissing a message at me. "Permission of C.O. . . . acrobats . . . microphone . . . physical fitness . . . permission of Commanding Officer. . . ."

I kept on talking. I sounded like somebody else. I felt quite detached

from the whole thing. "—accompanied at the piano," I said, knowing it would be wrong, "by Corporal Lowe. Lieutenant Singleton's first song will be an old favourite entitled, 'Because.'"

To cries of "Why?" from all parts of the house, I stumbled backwards towards the curtains, bowing. I felt for the opening with a hidden hand, smiling. But the curtains had been whipped spasmodically away a second before, and two half-naked men, much sunburnt, were somersaulting dangerously about the stage.

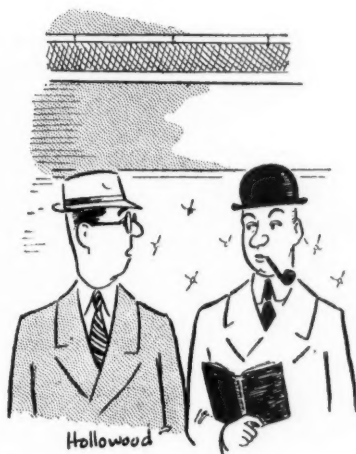
In the wings, a small man in a Balkan costume seized me by the collar and tie. "Where've you put my small tables?" he said. He was white beneath his tan. "How can I go on without my small tables?" He ran round the back whimpering. The man in cricket flannels came towards me threateningly with a spanner. "What's the idea, boxing the mike up?" he said. The Captain was waiting for me. He held up some of the hair on his face. His ninety-six-year-old eyes glared at me in anger.

"Bad show, that, sergeant," he said, "not mentioning that the performance is by kind permission of the Commanding Officer. And your announcement—! Really! Thought you'd had some experience of this sort of thing?"

"Well, sir—not exactly this sort of thing. Professionally, of course, I have—"

"Not the same thing at all, sergeant!" He paused, as if he would have said more. I took my greatcoat from its peg. He said no word. I put it on. He looked at me malevolently. I moved to the door. He made a half-gesture with the prompt-copy of the one-acter, then turned and disappeared through the ground-sheets.

As I went out into the mud, the thump of the acrobats still in my ears, I felt a little sad. Sad because I could not stay. Sad because I could not stay to announce, "Corporal Brewster, aged ninety-six." An Army audience, exclusively preoccupied with the topic of slow promotion, would have enjoyed that. It would have taken more than a Biggsley—nay, than an Irving!—to bring them to heel after that. . . .



"We're getting MUCH too apathetic—I've heard no careless talk for ages."

"BIG 'QUAKE SHOCK.—The whole earth continued to vibrate for about three hours as a result of a severe earthquake shock recorded at 3.40 (B.S.T.)."—Daily Telegraph. Must have upset astronomers a good deal.

At the Play

"ARC DE TRIOMPHE" (PHENIX)
 "THIS IS THE ARMY" (PALLADIUM)

IT is hard to guess at the reason why Mr. IVOR NOVELLO, if only by way of a change from those *Dancing Years* of his at the Adelphi, is not the leading young man in his *Arc de Triomphe* at the Phoenix. The part was obviously written for him by the author. The curtain goes up and, after a brief scene in which we meet *Marie Foret*, who aspires to be an opera-singer, we find ourselves among the roof-tops of Paris in the year 1907. *Marie* has installed herself in an attic, and there, in the attic adjoining, with nothing between them but a yard's leap and a sheer drop of ten stories or so, is the leading young man who aspires to write and sing songs for the cabarets. His name is *Pierre Bachelet*, and in the easy impetuosity of his wooing, the glad assurance of his smile and opening remarks, and the quick grace with which he executes that leap in full profile and on the faintest hint of encouragement from the lady, it is impossible not to see and hear the sempiternally handsome and winning Mr. NOVELLO himself in the mind's eye and ear. Their first duet is called "You're Easy To Live With," and if we note that its first phrase is identical with that which opens Chopin's D flat Nocturne, we take exception to what may very easily be an unconscious accident.

Nothing else in the score—surely the most original as well as the most ambitious that the composer has ever attempted—is in the least derivative or reminiscent of anything except earlier Novello operettes. *Marie's* "Shepherd Song" is a charming mock-pastoral. Her big song in the second act, "My Love For You," burgeons and drops its heavy petals like a full-blown Caroline Testout. On the other hand, *Pierre's* song, sung during a fancy-dress party on a Seine barge in 1914, and entitled "Paris Reminds Me Of You," is in the dapper as distinct from the gushing vein. In the third act we have a ghostly minuet danced

behind a gauze screen, which has a faintly macabre and wholly graceful piquancy, quite in a way of its own. And the whole piece culminates in a scene from an imaginary opera on Joan of Arc, with *Marie* (in 1925, and declaredly beyond her prime) leading a chorus which asseverates that France shall rise again. This scene is a musicianly and witty pastiche of all the French operas that have ever existed. Even so mellifluous would Ambroise Thomas have been—and in the course of his output doubtless was—on the subject of Joan of Arc. It is, in a word,



LOVE'S CONFIDENCES (WITH MUSIC)

Adhemar de Janze MR. RAYMOND LOVELL
 Marie Foret MISS MARY ELLIS
 Pierre Bachelet MR. PETER GRAVES

School of Massenet, which we take to be precisely the composer's intention here. The point of all the earlier tunes is that they have, whether we take to them or stay unseduced, the composer's own characteristic imprint upon them. They are not mock-Puccini, or mock-Romberg, or mock-Fraser-Simson, or even mock-Coward. They are Novello pure.

Have we in the course of this penetrating analysis of the composer NOVELLO rather side-tracked NOVELLO the plot-maker? The truth is that in *Arc de Triomphe* he himself rather side-tracks that one of his half a dozen talents. All that really happens is that

Pierre goes to the last Great War and is killed. He had quarrelled with *Marie* for giving herself to her art and (as he imagined) to her impresario as well. Nothing, not even the lady's articulate expostulations when they met again after he too had become famous, was ever to convince him that she was too great and self-sufficient an artist to require "protection." If we come to examine it, the third act is very precariously kept going by *Marie's* pretence—it would not deceive a child of two—that she is going to hand over Joan hook, line, and sinker (didn't

Mr. Shaw once call her a "queer fish"?) to an aspirant of seventeen. However, Mr. NOVELLO's muse has not been exercising its spell all evening to no purpose. It lubricates his plot; it makes even the shaky third act "go," and the operatic apotheosis is, as has already been indicated, a triumph beyond question. Miss MARY ELLIS is at the height of her handsome form as the opera-singer. As the impresario Mr. RAYMOND LOVELL moons in the background, the incarnation of dissatisfaction. (We cannot help feeling that this character is a little unfairly dealt with. If, after all, a lovely opera-singer agrees to be fitted into an impresario's furniture—as the French phrase it—we must sympathize with his resentment and admire his patience when she elects to be about as responsive as an ormolu table.) Mr. PETER GRAVES as a faint echo of Mr. NOVELLO's own hero is shyly adequate, and the production by Miss LEONTINE SAGAN makes

the whole play as sweetly alluring as the best of Mr. NOVELLO's tunes.

Mr. IRVING BERLIN has brought his American war-time show, *This is the Army*, to the Palladium, where it will stay for a week or so before touring this country. It is a fully competent revue, slickly produced and wholly and wholeheartedly performed by the American Army. It is well worth seeing for its own sake as well as for charity's. The first part culminates with seven coloured men dancing with that infectious glee and inborn rhythm which always makes us want to know why whites ever bother to emulate them in this art. A. D.

Lectures

"I SEE," said Major Fibbing, looking up from his morning correspondence with the expression that makes the men call him Simba Kali (Fierce Lion), "that Higher Authority in their wisdom decree that we shall keep the men *au fait* with current affairs by means of periodical lectures. Captain Hollyhock, you will take steps to obtain a blackboard."

Captain Hollyhock paled. He had never before been detailed to obtain a blackboard, but he had an instinctive feeling that his quest would be fraught with pitfalls. The Army is excellent at providing the necessities of existence, such as beer and steel helmets and cigarettes and food, but (if one may venture a criticism) it dislikes being asked to provide anything off the beaten track, such as boots for a man with two left feet. Captain Hollyhock had a nasty suspicion that blackboards would come in the latter category.

He attempted to hedge.

"One would use a blackboard to lecture to white troops," he said, "but surely a whiteboard would be better for black troops?"

"Don't be a fool," said the Major, "but I suppose I'll have to find a blackboard myself. It seems to me that I do *everything* in this Company."

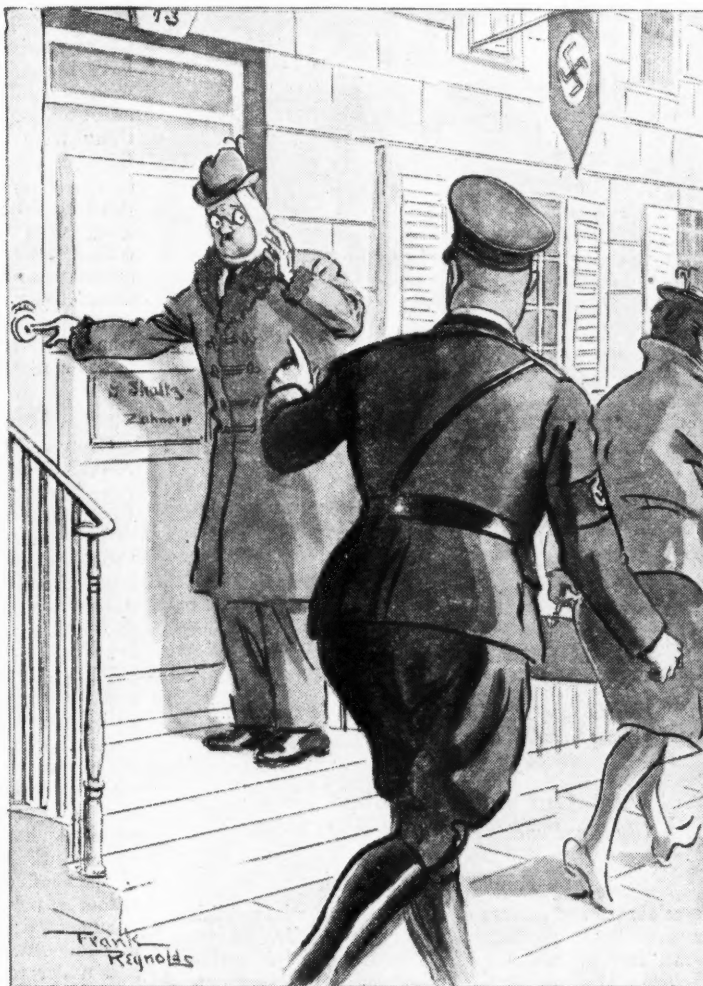
So he went off on the Company motor-bicycle and came back four hours later without a blackboard and in a very bad temper. Apparently he had started by going to the Garrison Adjutant, who had chatted about football for half an hour and then passed him on to the R.A.O.C., where he could only find a Welsh sergeant who gave him a lot of interesting information about boarding-houses in Llandudno but had no suggestions to offer about blackboards. So he tried the Royal Army Service Corps.

"And I got about as much service from them," he said grimly, "as I later got intelligence from the Intelligence Corps."

"Surely," said Captain Hollyhock rather tersely, as the rebuff over the whiteboard was still rankling, "the Army Education Corps are the proper people?"

"I've had enough of Corps for one day," said Major Fibbing, "but Sympton can try the Education Corps if he likes."

So Lieutenant Sympton called at the Education Office, where an educated-looking lance-corporal passed him on



"Take that defeatist look off your face!"

to a graduated-looking sergeant, who passed him on to a lieutenant who looked like a Fellow of Balliol.

"Have you any blackboards?" asked Sympton.

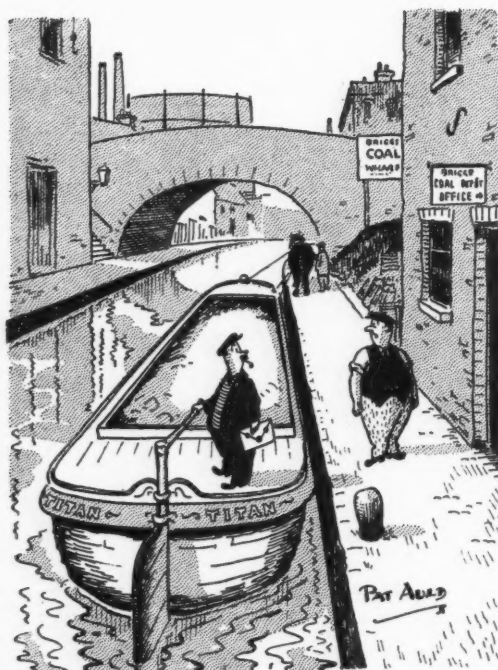
"Six," said the Education Officer, rather gloomily.

"Then we should like the loan of one occasionally," said Sympton.

"You can't have the loan of one occasionally," said the Education Officer, "because they are surplus to establishment. Don't ask me what that means. I am not as educated as all that. But I know that we cannot issue anything surplus to establishment unless we get special authority from Area. Apply through Group on Form 11892X. You can easily get

Form 11892X from the Stationery Office if you apply to Area through Group for it. . ."

As we expected to be moving within a month the Major said that the Education Officer could do something with his blackboard which I am sure he would have regretted. So instead we sent our men down to share a lecture with some Royal Engineers who owned a blackboard that they had "found" at Benghazi. Sympton was very proud of arranging this clever move about the joint lectures until he remembered, after we had dispatched our Kugombas, that the Engineers' lecture would be in English, of which very few of our men understand a word.



"Them's your Sealed Orders—not to be opened till you're past Camden Town."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The House of Macmillan

To celebrate the centenary of Macmillans, who published their first book on November 10, 1843, Mr. CHARLES MORGAN has written a book (*The House of Macmillan, 1843-1943*. MACMILLAN, 8/6) which is both a very entertaining contribution to literary history and a skilful and perceptive history of a firm which, within a relatively short period, has acquired something of the character of an institution. A work of genius may be issued by any publisher, but the faint stigma attaching to genius can be removed only by the Macmillan imprint, as was recognized by Festing Jones, of whom Mr. MORGAN writes—"Although Macmillan's only previous connexion with Samuel Butler had been their refusal of his translation of the *Odyssey*, it was to them that Festing Jones brought his *Memoir*." The founders of the firm were two brothers from the island of Arran, sons of a peasant farmer. The elder, Daniel, went into the book trade at ten, published his first book from Cambridge at thirty, and died before the firm moved to London. His younger brother, Alexander, did not share Daniel's Puritan mistrust of the world, his personality expanded after his brother's death, and by 1859, when he founded *Macmillan's Magazine*, he had many friends among the leading writers, artists and scientists of the day. But he preserved the simplicity and integrity of his early years, and being at the same time extremely shrewd, was often, as his characterisation of Thackeray shows, a better judge of men and books than more sophisticated critics. By 1872 the firm was securely

established, and the interest shifts from Alexander Macmillan to the triumphs and reverses of the firm. Tennyson, Pater, Matthew Arnold and Lewis Carroll, whose fussiness over the production of his books might have reconciled the firm to his disappearance, remained with Macmillans throughout. Hardy came and went and came again. Kipling came and stayed, though "everything from Kipling was at third hand—through Mrs. Kipling, through Watt." But Barrie was rejected, and Shaw's early novels were returned to him, each January, until he decided that novel-writing was not his destiny. They were returned, however, only after very careful consideration. "I had no idea," Mr. Shaw wrote to Mr. MORGAN a few months ago, "that the reports on novels I submitted were so appreciative. I consider them highly creditable to the firm's readers; for they make it clear that what was wrong was not, as I thought, any failure to spot me as a literary discovery. . . ." H. K.

This is Athens . . . America Calling.

Compared to a shapely book like *Greece Against the Axis, Miracle in Hellas* (MUSEUM PRESS, 12/6) is a loosely-knit record enough. Yet both Sir Stanley Casson and Miss BETTY WASON stress the immemorial resilience of Greece. "The reader will find out for himself," says the former, "that victory is in the soul and not in the hand." And the latter describes the Greeks, as the last British lorry left Athens, speaking with confidence of their own resurgence and with commiseration for the British. As an American broadcasting correspondent, Miss WASON came to Athens in March 1940 and left in June 1941; and her book gives a striking impression of the patriotism of the Greek rank and file and the treachery of high-placed officials both before and after the German occupation. The Metaxas dictatorship seems to have favoured double-dealing; and when your War Minister, your Prime Minister's secretary and your principal harbour-master are all quislings, and your telephone system has been a German subsidiary up to the outbreak of the war, it is obvious that your chances of national cohesion are gravely endangered. The conqueror's policy of "calculated starvation" is grimly documented; and the book closes gallantly with accounts reaching America of guerrilla activities in the mountains and underground resistance everywhere. H. P. E.

Selected Editorials

Ninety-nine Gower Street is the address of the Spectator Co., Ltd., and, suitably enough, it is the name which Mr. WILSON HARRIS has chosen for a volume (CONSTABLE, 8/6) containing articles selected from his editorial contributions to that paper. In his introduction he admits that the disinterment of one's own articles from ancient files is a chastening experience: so few of them seem on reflection to be worthy of resurrection. Still, fallible as a writer's judgment on his own work is apt to be, after a lapse of years he ought to be able to regard them impartially enough. So he proceeds with his first section—Crowns and Sovereigns, ranging from Edward VII to Princess Elizabeth. Then we come to Various People—appreciations of some political personages, with a few writers and journalists. The third heading—The Road to Munich—promises more entertainment to the general reader, who will no doubt be pleased to observe how even editors of important weeklies can go wrong in their estimates of current events. Mr. HARRIS confesses himself that "he views with some perplexity" the strictures he passed on the Treaty of Versailles: he certainly would not frame them thus to-day, and he is mildly surprised that he should have framed them then.

None the less they are included—as are the articles written week by week in 1938 when Europe fluctuated between hope and fear as the menace of war was lifted for a moment by the then Prime Minister's journeys in search of appeasement—attempting, as it were, to choke the tiger with cream. The rest of the book is chiefly concerned with the question of Federal Union, in which Professor LIONEL ROBBINS takes a hand, with the reform of prison life, and with a series of eight articles on religious subjects. L. W.

A Straight Furrow

It is obviously bad for a long-term occupation like farming to have to tack and trim at the beck of proletarian economics, producing now this now that for people more concerned with the failing pulse of the export trade than with the health of English land and English people. To farmers the war has at least brought some respite from what Mr. A. G. STREET acidly calls these "rigged" policies. He, for one, has banished cows from his almost cow-sick pasture and gone back to something more like the mixed farming he always preferred but could not afford to practise. Not that war farming is good farming—it is only good defence. It uses stored fertility without replacing it. But it has enabled Mr. STREET to produce a three years' diary far more adventurous and stimulating than the broadcasts and books of an (agriculturally speaking) less enthusiastic age. *Hiller's Whistle* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 12/6) seems to have released the writer's stored fertility as well as his land's, and ranged him firmly with those who are working most wisely for a better England. May he live to see the hurdled flock back on his chalk-country. For "to increase production and prevent bad farming . . . the Hampshire Down breeding flock is better than any War Agricultural Committee." H. P. E.

An American Tribute

The English resistance to Hitler in the year after Dunkirk forced Mr. LELAND DEWITT BALDWIN, an American historian, to reconsider his inherited prejudice against the British Empire, and *God's Englishman* (CAPE, 12/6) is the record of what he calls his "personal discovery of the golden thread of human rights that runs through the bloody warp and woof of Anglo-Saxon history." Though somewhat too discursive, ranging as it does from the significance of Magna Carta to the significance of Edward Lear's "Far and few, far and few, are the lands where the Jumbies live," the book is delightfully written, with many touches of humour and insight. "Of all the people of Western Europe," Mr. BALDWIN says, "the Englishman is most conscious of the mystery of the universe and the least afraid of it." What is called his muddling through is connected with this sense of the mystery of things, and "has its advantages in a world where even the finest mind cannot resolve life's complexities." In illustration of the French bewilderment at English irrationality, Mr. BALDWIN quotes a Frenchman's description of punch—"First you put in whisky to make it strong, then the water to make it weak; then you put in the lemon to make it sour, and the sugar to make it sweet; then you say 'Here's to you' and drink it yourself." But Mr. BALDWIN prefers English inconsistency to French logic, which he believes is often founded upon wishes rather than reality. He appears indeed to have little of the traditional American enthusiasm for France, calling it "the spoiled and peevish darling among nations," and saying that Vichy France "knows that if she bucks Germany she will suffer, but she can flout the Anglo-Saxons and even if they win she will be received back into the comity of nations." In dealing

with a country as a whole it is difficult to put in the necessary shade, if one's general view is favourable, and the necessary light, if one's general view is hostile. It was perhaps to correct his enthusiasm elsewhere that Mr. BALDWIN treats the eighteenth century so severely. That century certainly had its limitations, for which, however, one may feel thankful when Mr. BALDWIN quotes Santayana's so often quoted tribute to England "Never since the heroic days of Greece has the world had such a sweet, just, boyish master." H. K.

Who is the Happy Heroine?

Sylvia, the heroine of Miss MARGERY MAITLAND DAVIDSON's new novel *The Music Goes Round* (DUCKWORTH, 8/6), lives in the country but goes frequently to town, loves gardening, 'develops a gift for writing, is good at tennis and knows how to act crew in a sailing boat, yet is slim and has a delicate charm—in fact is the happy heroine, she that every English girl should wish to be. She adores her mother and sacrifices herself to her, although the completeness of the sacrifice is rather forced on her by her mother's astuteness and by family circumstances. Three interesting men offer her three different types of love, and as far as all this goes her lot is enviable, but her first lover is offended because she cannot subordinate her family's claims to his at a crisis, and her mother's demands bind her hand and foot against her own desires; while her only brother, in making havoc of his own life, adds to her chains. Yet *Sylvia's* integrity wins her happiness and the freedom that she desires, and her story, though it is set in the months just before the war, is a green oasis among the dryness of much modern fiction. So charming is it in essentials that the reader forgives some queer English and queerer punctuation; and such queer things as that a man's handwriting changes from "almost impossible" to "neat"—lucky fellow!—after a few weeks at sea. B. E. S.



"Have you a calendar for 1944 with the black-out times omitted after April 27th?"



"Before you go would you mind leaving some signs of a desperate struggle?"

"On the Hands—Down"

I SHALL not forget the last job I was given by the Minister of Agriculture until I am quite certain I can stand upright again.

I got it because someone had carelessly left the wireless on and word came through that reserves were being called up on the potato front, so I thought I would go and see what response there was to the appeal.

It was a fine morning and the road was deserted except for odd people like myself. As we walked along others joined us to see where we were going, which of course brought out others to see what the excitement was about. Before long you might have thought we were going to see England play the Rest, for there seemed to be about half a million of us, more or less.

With seven others I turned into a field which the farmer said was roughly five acres. As an old harvesting hand I could see at a glance that it was a

couple of sleepless nights and then you get used to it all.

The mechanized part of the job was already completed and the potatoes were lying there on the ground just waiting to be picked up. I should say there was a potato for every man, woman and child in the United Kingdom and then some left over for experiments for the Kitchen Front. As a war effort on the part of the potato family it was magnificent.

The buckets were there and the sacks were lying there, so, without waiting for the whistle, we got down to it.

All you have to do is to pick up a potato, put it in the bucket and, when the bucket is full, stand up and rub your back as far as you can, saying, "Lucky it's fine weather." You then carry your bucket to the sack and empty half of it on the ground. After a while you realize that the bottom of

the sack is somewhere in Australia, but you don't let the others know this, so they go on emptying their buckets quite happily into the sacks.

When you are not looking some giant of a fellow completely fills the sack and takes it away, so that when you are ready with your next bucket you find a deflated bag and you have to start from the bottom again. By this time you are past caring what the next man thinks about the war, and only with difficulty do you prevent yourself getting into the sack with the rest of the potatoes.

But one evening the final ton, or potato, is lifted, the game is over, the Rest have put up a good show, and once again you join the crowd outside now going in the opposite direction.

It appears to have doubled, and so it has, for everyone now is walking on all fours, with potatoes in their socks, doing the potato crawl.

For My Entertainment, Anyway

DEAR MR. CYNDIKIT,—I am intending to write a play.

As you have several theatres under your management, I would like to discuss the play with you before I write it; so would you say, please, when and where we could meet. I would like to know firstly where you could put the play on; who will act in it; and (finally) what will be the date to tell people who ask when the first night is to be.

I should explain that I have been letting fall a few hints that I am writing a play, and that certain people who shall be nameless will appear in it in a far from flattering light. It would point my meaning if I could add that it happens to be opening on the third Thursday, say, in November, at His Majesty's (or the Metropolitan, Edgware Road, if you prefer . . . but at least somewhere definite), so that they will realize I mean it.

For your information, the play will be about people in this unit, especially my O.C., whose part will be a fat one, though I don't think it much use trying to save money by getting him to act it himself, because the people I want to see the play are already fed up with seeing the O.C. and would rather see someone else pretending to be him, especially if he were not there at the time.

The reason I want to know WHEN it will go on is that the curtain to the first act is an announcement that the armistice has just been signed, and it would be no good waiting so long to put the play on that the armistice really had been signed; I want to take people aback by the audacity of this twist, and show them in a rather witty way how my O.C. (and certain other people) have been behaving during the war, and how they will have to alter their tune directly the armistice is signed. Including the head waiters at the hotels here, the local taxi-man, and the wives of two people who are senior to me.

The only place I can think of as a suitable setting for the opening scene is the railway station where all these people could be gathered, some going on leave, others seeing off people who had been posted, and others meeting friends who have come up to stay in order to see an ENSA show for nothing.

They would all be putting forward their points of view, showing themselves in their true colours and complaining about how late the train is, when, just as people see the situation exactly as it is, the station-master

would come out of the signal-box, or wherever he does his phoning, and say in a kind of hush that they will not moan so much when they know *why* the train is late; and in his opinion it may never come now anyway, because the armistice was signed that day at half-past six. In the unforgettable silence that follows, the various characters register how they feel about this (namely . . . awful). Then for one moment the curtain is raised again to show my O.C. leaving the group of people at the first-class window where he had been trying to book a sleeper, and with a changed expression adding himself to the third-class queue for cheap tickets. This will send people out for the interval saying that bit was frightfully good, and so true really, and the cleverest part was that no word was spoken, and yet everyone got the idea. The curtain will rise once more after that to show a woman crying. I do not yet know what woman, or why.

In the second act I shall show these same people fighting to live by cutting one another's throats in the great world of business, and all the ones who were most beastly to me will be asking the man who is supposed to be me for employment; especially my O.C. This part I would like very much to play myself, if you have no objection, though I would rather the O.C. did not

play his, as I prefer this to be played by somebody who would be more like my O.C. *would* be at such a time than *he* would . . . if you see what I mean.

After this act the audience go out for another drink, wondering what the moral is, and how it will all end, and I can tell you in confidence that it will be a terrific last act which will take their breath away, because after a short but hectic peace it is announced that the armistice has been *cancelled*; at which all the characters show intense relief, and emotion, and so do the audience, especially my O.C. The moral of the play is that whatever we are fighting for is not what we shall get; and a lot of satirical remarks will bring this point out and send the audience home thinking, I promise you.

Please let me know, therefore, what you can arrange about production, for I have now told these people that they will figure in my play, and I cannot expect them to believe that for long unless I can show them your type-written letter; if, by any chance, you are not inclined to risk your own money, would you say what you would charge for me to put it on myself for one performance so that these people at least could see it, especially my O.C.

Yours faithfully,

10256792 Pte. GUFF, C. K.,
"A" Platoon.



"Pardon me—but are you looking at that?"

Complacency in the Office

"NOBODY expects the war will be over for years and years yet," said Doris. "Don't they?" I said. "Well, I do, and I'm not nobody, am I?" So Doris said I was complacent. "Well," I said, "if I never get anything worse than that said about me I shan't do so badly." Because I'm just about tired of all this talk about complacency, and it's my belief if the war ever does come to an end they won't dare release it till they've had time to revise all their pep talks about a long dreary road ahead yet before peace comes into sight.

As for all those people who keep warning us far worse trials to come when the war's over, well, all I can say is they must have been having a pretty nice war all on their own all this time—much nicer than anyone else I know's. They'll be telling us next thing that peace will only be the beginning of the beginning and we must be prepared for a long dreary road ahead before war comes into sight again.

I could do with this war if you ever knew where you were two minutes together. It used to be mustn't have any alarm and despondency and ready to run you in for pulling a long face, and now everybody jumps on you if you say it's four years nearer the end than it was. And if it isn't they shouldn't have all these Victory drives and Victory stockings and things putting ideas into your head.

One thing though: there's lots more cafés open now and any amount of dairies where you can get a sandwich and a cup of coffee if you're in a hurry before they close at 2.30 for their own joint and two vegs. like the day Mr. Head gave me a ticket for his Horticultural Show.

He's as pleased as a dog with two tails all because some of his special tomatoes are going to be tried out at their experimental place. But I wish he'd go in for apples instead and then perhaps I should find out what's happened to all the russets this war, not having had one for nearly as long as no oranges.

I must say I never saw such lovely apples, especially being about the only thing there I hadn't to look at the

label to make sure what they were. What with pear-shaped tomatoes and tomatoes looking like vegetable marrows, and red marrows just like tomatoes, and Black Beet and Scarlet Carrots that said Tender and True just like a valentine, there was so much camouflage about that I was hardly surprised when I went to look at some dahlias to find they'd taken a prize for being chrysanthemums. The first thing that made me feel at home and might be back in our own works was something about the effect of storage temperature on bolting till Mr. Head said it was only onions. He bought his wife the *Book of Rarer Vegetables*, and if that's his idea of a Christmas present, if I were her I'd give him rarer vegetables!

It never rains but it pours, and if he didn't take another afternoon off for another show last week, saying we must all of us Grow More Food as if he'd never set eyes on our tomato-shaped, tomato-coloured tomatoes up on the roof, being quite beneath his notice nowadays. So Doris and I thought we'd better make hay while the sun shines and have a good blitz on his room the minute we'd given him time to come back for something he'd

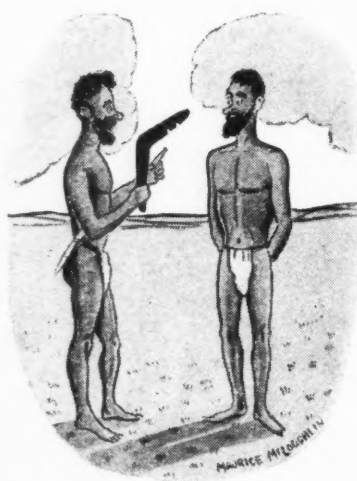
forgotten. Because the way stuff piles up it'll take a demolition squad to dig him out one of these days: he can't bear to throw anything away or have his routine upset. Reminds me of when we got the new filing cabinet and the time we had getting him into that.

Though clearing out isn't a job I'm fond of myself if it wasn't for salvage. Nothing to show for it and I often think it's like eating fish and you end up with more than you began with, and look at the time it takes too, and that's why I can't be bothered with herrings, though Jim, my boy-friend in the Drawing office, says it's only because I'm bone lazy.

And all the time Doris and me waiting for the new forms back from the Ministry and wondering which would be here first, Christmas or Willie. If I had a hundred pounds for every time I've said to that lazy-bones, "Now don't you go getting complacent, Willie," it'd pay for quite a few seconds of the war I often tell him. You can't let the office-boy think he can get away with anything just because there's a war on. If I've told Doris and him once I've told them a dozen times there's a lot of people going to miss this war when it is over, and it'll take a bit of getting used to not having it there to put the blame on.

Still, you can get used to anything. Look at Doris's girl-friend who's in the Civil Service and afraid every minute the All Clear would go the other night and longing for the guns to start again so she wouldn't have to go out to a fire-watching practice, tin hat and pail but no water and all, just when she wanted to finish washing a piece of carpet. Now some people would call that complacency, but I will say she's made a good job of it and by now it looks quite the kind of carpet you wouldn't mind chewing yourself.

She's gone all so domesticated since she started doing for herself that there just isn't room in her head for anything but housekeeping. The other morning she got into the bus, took out her shopping list and pencil, held out her fare to the conductor without looking up, and asked for "A small wholemeal, please."



"I got another Zero to-day."

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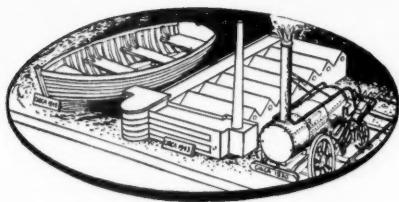
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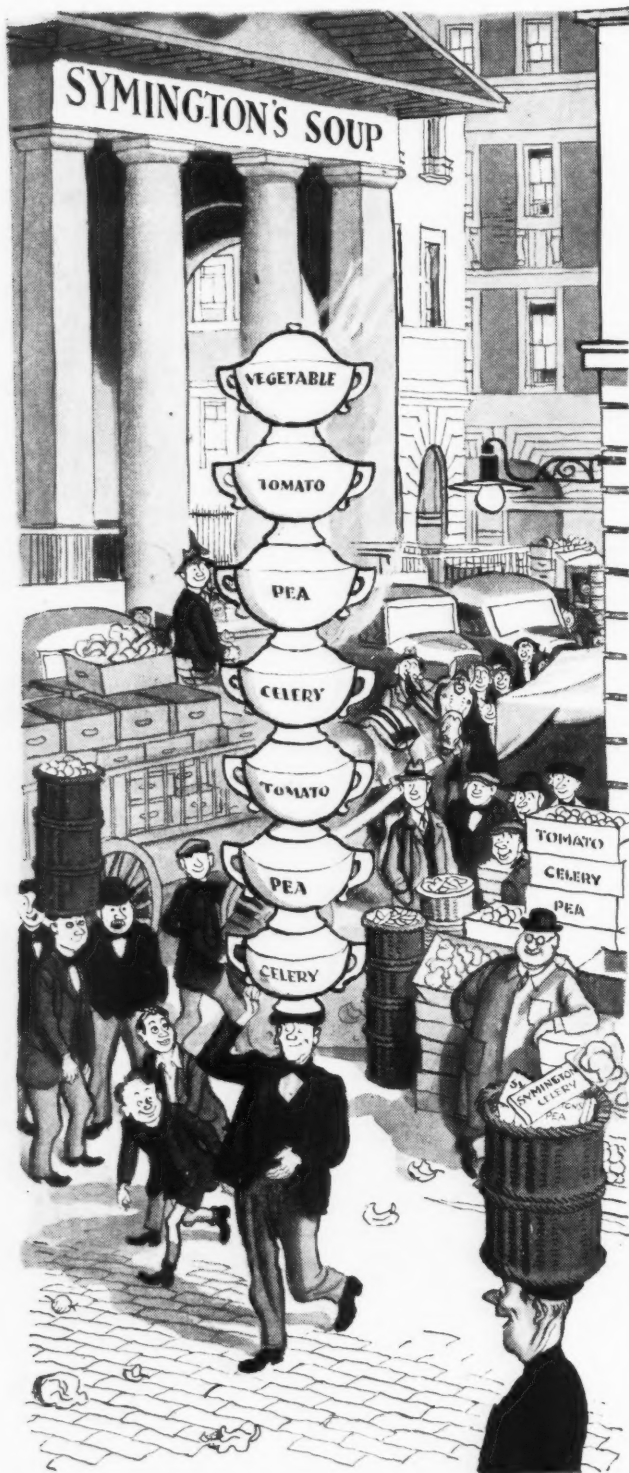
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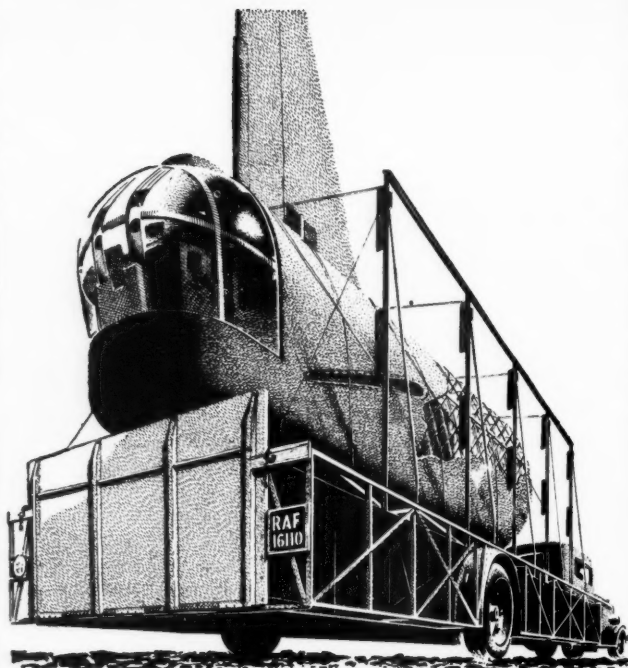
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